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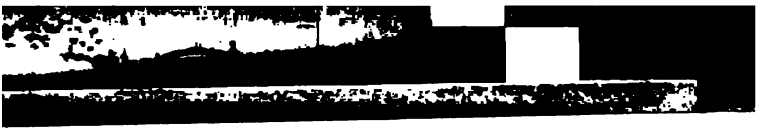
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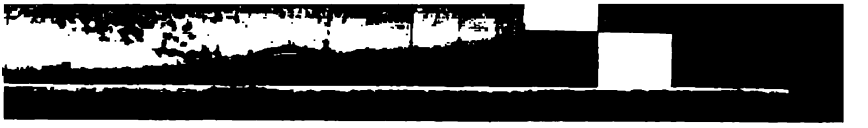
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BROOME STREET STRAWS

ROBERT CORTES HOLLIDAY



BROOME STREET STRAWS

BY

ROBERT CORTES HOLLIDAY

AUTHOR OF "WALKING-STICK PAPERS," "BOOTH TARKINGTON," "JOYCE KILMER; A MEMOIR," "PEEPS AT PEOPLE," ETC.

NEW YORK

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY



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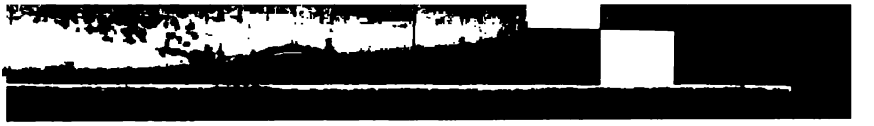
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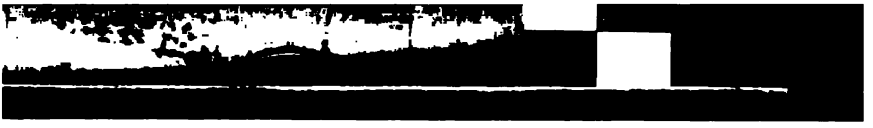
WALTER JACK DUNCAN

ONETIME FELLOW SOJOURNER ON BROOME STREET



FOREWORD

A number of these odds and ends of stories, papers, and sketches originally appeared in the pages of various magazines and newspapers. "Hunting Hack Work," "Posing War for the Painter," "Literary Visiting in England," "Tarkingtonapolis," "An Article Without an Idea," and "On Getting Something Published, Etc.," were first published in *The Bookman*. "An Amorous Conspiracy," "How Mr. Tillon Was Saved," "Revisited by Pickens," and "Crabbed Age and Youth" were printed in the Saturday Magazine of the New York *Evening Post*. "A Highway of Quaint Memories" ran on the editorial page of the New York *Sun*. "Folks That Rile Us" in the New York *Tribune*. A little magazine, now no more, *The Literary Miscellany*, contained "What Is a Library?" and "An Inspired Library." "The Amazing Failure of O. Henry" appeared, in part, in the Chicago *Daily News;* "Hoosier Highlights" in the Indianapolis *Star;* "Human Beings" and "To the



FOREWORD

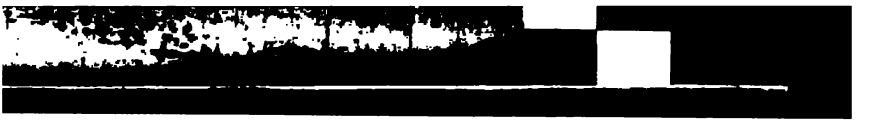
Glory of Cities" in *Puck*. The author thanks the gentlemen in control of these publications for permission to reprint these contributions to their pages.

R. C. H.

New York, 1919.

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BROOME STREET STRAWS



BROOME STREET STRAWS

PROLOGUE

A BROOME STREET PREFACE

YOU might think it a bit odd if you should ask a man whether he had gone to Yale, and he replied: "No, I went to Broome Street."

Yet, you know, when George Moore's mother asked him where he was going for his education, Oxford or Cambridge, he answered that he was going to the cafés of Paris. And it would be idle to say that he did not acquire considerable, if somewhat un-Oxonian, understanding.

Just so.

Streets, then, like universities, have a good deal to do with the cut of a man. Streets are, in a manner of speaking, educations. We are all familiar with that sterling American figure of our popular stage, the Man from Main Street. Also, for instance, a great many people have



what can most aptly be termed a Broadway mind. There is, too, a distinctly Fifth Avenue habit of thought, a Wall Street point of view, a Bowery manner, a One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street cast of culture, and so on.

The house is the seventh one from the corner. I can see it now, as plain as print.

One of a block all alike—one house differing from another only in the matter of condition of preservation and repair. The ancient Knickerbocker design: two-story brick; gable roof, two dormer windows peering forward from each; in each a venerable door, richly polished by age; on some glistening brass knockers; on others dark knockers of iron; and on each door a name-plate, shining like a policeman's badge. Five stone steps mounting to each door, frequently with a pair of antique newel posts before it, some decrepit, some still trim and erect. At (from the street) the right-hand side of each door the glimpse of an area-way.

A somewhat gala effect is wrought in this rather drab street by the tiny white paper labels pasted beside numerous doors, all at just about the height of the eye from the sill. All at the right-hand side. If you mount to one of these en-

trances and peer closely at one of these little labels you make out, written in pale ink and in an elementary hand, the words: "Furnished Rooms."

A quiet block, with coming from the corner, like the melodious surge of the sea, the rumble of Hudson Street's heavy traffic of trucks pounding over the cobble-stones. A humble scene; a street, so to say, more than a bit run down at the heel. The people one sees about are in effect very—well, undistinguished. Though yesterday (or the day before) when a very elderly gentleman died, after ninety years of life, the newspapers spoke of him as having been born here on Broome Street when this was "a fashionable residential quarter." The street was named after one John Broome, Lieutenant-Governor of New York State in 1804, and a prominent member of many commercial and charitable institutions. As to that, however, the residents here today, it is safe to say, know nothing. Though in this particular block a glory still lingers. Of recent years its proudest tradition is that it was one time (some forty, fifty, sixty years ago) called, because of the dwelling here of so many gentlemen engaged in public life, "politicians' row."

But what about this house seventh from the corner? Well, sir, there was once a young man —this was (several years ago) when all the world was young—who, after an elaborate education in the subject, took up the profession of art. He became (he had studied under the ablest and most distinguished of painters) "Uncle Ned" on a New York newspaper. That is, he ran on the Children's Page a series of pen drawings called "What Willie Saw." One week Willie saw an organ-grinder; another week, a policeman; next, an artist, a sailor, a waiter or a coachman—and so on. Payment was computed at the rate of two dollars for each column transversed. A four line limerick was required of the artist to accompany each drawing. And for these the compensation was ten cents a line.

As the money for the drawing was obtained by the practice of his profession, this, as was becoming, was devoted by the young man to his support. The money for the limerick, however, being sheer velvet, was spent in riotous living. Thus it was, in such happy circumstances, that the young man, minding to live in a manner commensurate with his position, elected as the place of his residence a quarter of the world peculiarly

favored for the cultivation of a simple human perspective. He took up his abode in this house, his Alma Mater, seventh from the corner.

The hall within is dark and narrow. You feel your way up a musty, carpeted stair, by the aid of a rickety baluster rail. It is very round and it rattles as you go. In the bathroom, you recollect as you pass, everything is broken. The tub is zink, set in a box jovially resembling a dilapidated coffin. When you come to where the stairs cease and a rusted iron ladder begins, that is the top. The ladder leads, through a trap, to the roof. Turning toward the rear on the dusky landing, you lift, hung on a door constructed of several perpendicular boards, a much loosened latch.

Heigh ho! 'Tis a chamber indeed! A rosy place! The ceiling, beginning its steep descent shortly before you, slopes down almost to the floor; from its shadow the dormer window thrusting outward toward the day, a little vestibule, or vessel, of light. Yes, to be frank, the little room is in what is called a garret. It was not, however, *because* it was a garret that the young man of whom I speak lived there (as many now do live in garrets, and stables), it was purely be-



cause of the circumstances connected with his income which I have mentioned. No æsthetic garret, this, not the garret of an "intellectual" or a "radical"—just a garret.

Before the window, across the upper part of which flaps a rakishly dilapidated window-shade, is a long, low desk, a little drawer mounted on either end. Perched on one of these drawers a tarnished alarm clock; beneath the desk a peach-basket serving as a receptacle for waste paper. Against one leg of the desk a huge, bulging, and very worn portfolio. At one side of the room is an unshapely and somewhat bumpy-looking object covered with a bedspread in sear and yellow leaf; and this object is, in fact, a bed. Back to it, a comical chair.

Across the room, in the corner, close up under the eaves, is a table of the variety known as "kitchen," its top ranged with rows of tattered books, noses down; books, real books; Cellini, St. Francis, "The Anatomy of Melancholy," Gil Blas, Rabelais, Fielding, Swift, Sterne, Shakespeare (Chiswick edition), Keats, Shelley, James, Balzac, Sir Thomas Browne—that sort of books. Just this way from the table, a bureau, the far end of its top drawer "caved in." Mounted upon

it, an oil lamp without a shade, and a five-and-ten-cent-store mirror. On the wall above it, beside a gasjet, a handsome print, unframed, of Manet's "Boy With a Sword." This way again from the table, a frayed trunk shrouded in a ragged piece of burlap. There is no washstand in the room; you washed your face at the sink, common to all the tenants of the floor, in the hall.

When the young man put on his overcoat, and it chanced to brush the floor, its hem picked up a litter of that which was theoretically a matting. When he awoke in the morning he frequently amused himself before arising by placing the soles of his feet against the ceiling, when, straightening out his legs, he would literally "raise the roof." When, in damp weather, he looked out of his window he saw an unknown neighbor, whose roof was below him, put up a tattered oilskin across his broken skylight, and he thought (the young man) how much better off was he in his dry (if somewhat raw) chamber.

And here it was, in a rosy and golden haze, that this young man, like Anatole France, when he was the idlest of his life learned the most.



I

THE ROMANCE OF DESTINY AND MR. NUGGENS

"NUGGENS' Dairy Lunch." This was the sign, in white enamel letters, sparkling on a very small window. I was on my way to breakfast.

Mrs. Brew, whose peer as a landlady I fear I shall never see again, had died some little while past from heat prostration; and I had been, in the matter of "table board," cast upon the world. I became an authority on the subject of "eating around." That cannot be gone into now; it is matter for a separate brochure. Briefly to summarize, I tried tables d'hote, French and Italian, ranging from repasts in substance light for a canary to dinners far beyond in cost what I could afford for provisions for two days. I experimented with "combination breakfasts," with "business men's lunches," and "Baltimore," "Harvard," "Yale," and divers other kinds. "Childs" was not missed. Bakeries I visited, and

delicatessen shops. I found no abiding city. I was a wanderer who tarried but for a meal.

I had eaten in less bright and pleasant looking places than Nuggens' Dairy Lunch; though it seemed rather a frail craft to embark oneself in for a meal. I read the menu card, which stood in a neat black frame, beside a neat pyramid of oranges on a glass dish, in the window; and went in. "Who," as a writer of mine says, "does not admire and bow his head before the romance of destiny?" And whose destiny is not a romance! Nuggens' Lunch Room was a stage upon which I was to surprise a profound human drama.

At regular intervals on the painted, cleanly walls, neatly legible signs, framed uniform with the card in the window and naming the different dishes to be had, with the prices, produced a somewhat decorative effect. A half dozen small, square, bare-top tables; and across at the back of the room a miniature counter, newly painted a bright color, a shining nickle coffee machine on one end—thus was the little place.

A slight man of about fifty, in immaculate linen coat and apron, advanced from behind his little bar. He had a bald dome and a grey moustache. He approached bowing. In an attitude



suggestive of humility, he looked at me mildly. Then, it struck me, with something of nervousness he fell to re-arranging the salt and pepper shakers, sugar bowl and other articles upon the table at which I sat, and polishing its speckless surface, while I read his signs: "Oat Meal and Milk 10 cts." "Cocoa a cup 5 cts." "Swiss Cheese Sandwich 6 cts." "2 Eggs 12 cts." I told him I would have some eggs. With great alacrity, he said, "Yes, sir;" and turning, trotted —with that motion of an elderly fellow who seems to hurry to regain his equilibrium, in an endeavor to run and catch up with himself—back beyond his counter and behind a screen in one corner; from whence presently I heard a great sizzling.

Throughout my meal he imparted to me through my every pore, so to speak, a consciousness of his desire to please, and a fearfulness that something might offend. Feeling to a point even of discomfort, the tenseness of the situation, I endeavored to say something encouraging. I remarked that he had a nice little place here. He said in reply, in a deprecating, apologetic tone, that of course the only dishes he had as yet were dairy dishes; but he added that it was his desire,

should he succeed sufficiently to justify it, to add chops.

"Well," I said bravely, "I think you ought to succeed. You have a nice place to start with, and," I added (though I didn't know a thing about it), "it is a good location here, I think, for a restaurant."

He had been told, he replied, that there were too many in the neighborhood already. "Well," he said, thoughtfully, "of course I don't expect to succeed much anywhere." He hoped, he added, that he would be able to make a living. I was, I felt, acquainted with Mr. Nuggens. He was of the poor in spirit. Life had not, as the "Christmas Sermon" says, ministered to his vanity.

Nuggens' Dairy Lunch Room was not bad; and in a short time I fell quite into the habit of going there. In short, in my case, Mr. Nuggens (in the hackneyed phrase) filled a long felt want. Odd that something like Nuggens' had not been created before!

Perhaps, once invented, anything seems simple enough.

Within a short time considerable bustle went on around breakfast time in Mr. Nuggens' tiny



place. New acquisitions, too, appeared week by week. Apparently, profits were at once largely converted into improvements. Broad-armed lunch room chairs appeared against one wall; several additional tables presented themselves.

One day a highly varnished sideboard reflected the customers' heads in its mirror. Pies and crullers sprouted on top of the little counter; various fruits soon garnished the sideboard. The menu as chronicled in the little frames ere long had spread well over the limited wall space.

Mr. Nuggens' customers could not fail to observe that an innovation had been introduced into the restaurant business. Before Mr. Nuggens there was, I found, a remarkable uniformity in cheap restaurants. I supposed (and I suppose most people supposed) that cumulative experience had fairly accurately figured out this business by this time, and that in this world one got a half cantaloupe for a dime. But at Mr. Nuggens' one's money was like Aladdin's lamp; and you were served with two halves of a superior cantaloupe for ten cents. Mr. Nuggens suggested, to the bookish mind, a savant who might keep an old book shop; it gave him, it seemed, as much satisfaction simply to put before

you a grapefruit of such quality, or a glass of milk of that extraordinary size, as the bibliophile would find in disclosing to you a copy of some rare edition. It occurred to my imagination that Mr. Nuggens might be attempting to conduct a dairy lunch, unendowed, on the idealistic principles of the old New Theatre. Yet, this Don Quixote of a restauranteur did not seem like a man losing money.

Mr. Nuggens (whose sails, so to speak, I should say had hung rather limply hitherto but had now caught a little breeze) was suddenly, to drop the metaphor, run off his legs. He needed help. One morning a somewhat tall, rather full-bosomed young woman was behind the counter when I sat down. The little room was otherwise empty. There ensued a moment's utter silence.

Now when you go into a shop and are served by an attendant there, either male or female, apparently no personal electric contact to speak of is felt on either side. The clerk is to you like a mechanical crank, like a push-button. You are to him, no doubt, like only so much of the material he handles in a day's work. I had not reflected upon this matter before this particular morning. I became curiously and uncomfort-



ably conscious that this young lady was very conscious that she was alone in a room with a male person to whom she had not been introduced, and who might at any moment address her. It crossed my mind that Miss Nuggens had been suddenly pressed into service, without any preliminary initiation in the business of waitress. If you were as suddenly called upon to polish a few gentlemen's shoes no doubt you would be ridiculously aware of what you were doing, too. I was considering in my mind what might be the most tactful way in which to open negotiations for my breakfast when the young lady hit first upon a solution to the dilemma. She called out suddenly, "You wait upon yourself here, like a Baltimore lunch!"

This struck me as a most ingenious idea. I came up to the little counter; she prepared my food and handed it to me; and I carried it back to my table myself. Thus, she was enabled to serve me as a hostess might, and I was relieved from the unpleasant situation of forcing a young lady into a condition of servitude. Several other customers coming in followed my example. The new regime was in full swing when Mr. Nuggens dashed in, and re-established the old order di-

rectly by mopping everybody's table, somewhat to the inward scorn, I felt, of the daughter of the house. But in this world it is one thing to be a haughty daughter and quite another to be an anxious, struggling, long-defeated little father.

Still defeat was not so much with Mr. Nuggens as formerly. I thought I noticed a brightness in his eye. I thought I marked a spring in his step. He had to be out some now, as he said, to buy. And he remarked with something like vim that "a man could not be everywhere at once."

Mrs. Nuggens' services, too, now began to be required to help man the ship. She took over much of the sizzling duties behind the screen. Mrs. Nuggens was elderly, rather frail of physique, decidedly bent; a lady-like, slightly sad-looking woman, dressed a trifle slouchily in black. She was rather listless in manner, and gave the impression of having been somewhat dulled by a long period of unstimulating experience. One suspected she did not much believe even now in the restaurant.

Mr. Nuggens said what he needed was a little more room for his cooking. You could have fried ham now with your eggs. A little more room,



Mr. Nuggens said, and by George! he'd have small steaks. I rejoiced within; for a strictly dairy diet, however tasteful, prolonged is somewhat monotonous. I began to foresee that that vague, trembling ambition of future chops was now a bagatelle of mere time.

The steadily increasing business atmosphere soon brought Miss Nuggens into line. It is all very well for one to be aristocratic in one's notons before one enters a business atmosphere; a business atmosphere limbers one up. The wrenches to Miss Nuggens' view of her place in the universe gradually diminished in force; and after a short while she entered into the spirit of the enterprise, and was able to wait on table as well as anybody.

Enterprise? Enterprise is the word. Mr. Nuggens acquired more room; he rented a dark compartment about the size of a small closet on the other side of his wall; cut a hole through somewhat like that in a butler's pantry—and had a kitchen! He did away with his counter and disposed of his broad-armed chairs, replacing these things (speaking figuratively, his outgrown shell) with more tables. In the new kitchen was a surprising accession. I shall not soon

forget the pride—much conscious and unconscious pride, as Carlyle says of Frederick the Great—with which, the first day, through his butler's pantry window Mr. Nuggens yelled, "Chef!" (I caught a dim glimpse before the shutter closed of a fat colored woman.)

"Chef!" he cried. "a small steak, medium!" To have been the first to do anything has always appealed to man; I ate the first steak served in Mr. Nuggens'. Who ate the first steak, medium, cooked at Delmonico's?

Mrs. Nuggens took charge of the new cash register, a professional waitress was installed; Miss Nuggens retired again to the private life of a young lady; a goodly-sized blackboard was adjusted to the wall, on which was to be inscribed day by day the wealth of the menu. I began to have a premonition that, after some considerable delay, Mr. Nuggens and that tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune—had met.

The more Mr. Nuggens added to his bill of fare the more one became impressed with the extraordinary liberality of the portions he served. "Three chops!" I said. "How is this?"

"Oh, those are small ones," Mr. Nuggens re-

plied. "I aim to give something to eat," he continued. "Now many people don't do that. When a big, strong working man comes in here," Mr. Nuggens went on, raising his hand—Mr. Nuggens was becoming a trifle portly—"I know he wants something to put in his stomach."

There was a humanity about Mr. Nuggens that was not born to bloom unheeded. Touch a man's stomach, it hath oft been said since old time, and you touch him where he lives. Upon the waters Mr. Nuggens cast his bread and rolls, eggs and steaks and bacon. Big, strong, working men in hosts descended upon Mr. Nuggens. Milk wagons by the block, seemingly, drew up before his door in the mornings while their drivers put something into their stomachs. Policemen marched in, such was the effect, in platoons. It was a motley gathering at Nuggens'.

It is said that always in the time of need a great man arises. Mr. Nuggens, by the Oliver Goldsmith-like simplicity of his nature, appealed both to the hungry and to the genteel. "Now when you come into a restaurant," said Mr. Nuggens, "you want things put on the table tidy and with taste." At Mr. Nuggens' board, figuratively speaking, the lion sat down with the lamb.

Rough garbed expressmen put their feet under the same table with quite chic young ladies. The genius of Mr. Nuggens brought out the fact that there are living alone in the world a considerable number of young women of unexceptional appearance who like good things put on the table tidily and with taste but at the same time find it necessary to be very economical in their meals.

The conception of Mr. Nuggens as a man of genius, it was patent, had never occurred to his wife; nor, no doubt, to anyone else during the last half century or so. But no more had it, before middle-age, of General Grant. The idea very probably had not been present with Mr. Nuggens. He believed himself, I take it, a failure. Lo! this it was only, he had not found the stage to display his parts. What a lottery is this world! Suppose Mr. Nuggens had died at forty-eight! Now, however, the hour and the man had met. Mr. Nuggens went into the cheap restaurant business and so took up his divine work in the world.

When he found that his latest venture was not to fall through, that it had taken hold, begun to move, even hit up speed,—he responded like a man inspired. His nature unfolded like a flower.

Laxity became energy, diffidence became decision. He became conscious of his power. Nothing could stop him now.

* * * *

Mr. Nuggens rented the room next door and cut a connecting archway through the wall. In response to the demand for more help, Kitty, the little waitress, brought around her sister. Kitty, one of those waitresses by intuition, who know by some trick of telepathy, apparently, before you even mention it, that you want sugar or a glass of water, seemed another expression of Mr. Nuggens' extraordinary talent. Napoleon and such folks gather about them as if by magic subordinates of a very high order, such as mediocre restaurant proprietors appear somehow never to get hold of.

Mr. Nuggens' new room was much larger than his first one. Walls and ceiling neatly painted, floor oiled, and lace curtains across the windows, it was a really pleasant place in which to sit. The new window sign read "Nuggens' Famous Restaurant."

Nothing, as the old adage has it, succeeds like success. "What I need now," said Mr. Nuggens, "is a coal fire and an oven. Then I could

have things!" He rented the basement for a kitchen, connecting it with the eating room by a dumb-waiter. News was wafted to me of Miss Nuggens: Mr. Nuggens inquired of me concerning a boarding-school for his daughter; I felt the romance of the world; I was stirred by the vicissitudes of fortune.

Thanksgiving was a great day at Mr. Nuggens'. He had 'possum. For days before advance-notice headlines had appeared on the menu cards. I had never eaten 'possum, but I knew I should have to now. I was Mr. Nuggens' star boarder; all distinguished positions, no doubt, when one comes to know them, have their peculiar responsibilities. I could not, like the obscure, eat as I listed. Mr. Nuggens always requested my opinion on the special dishes; indeed I knew of most of these treats some time in advance of the other patrons.

Nuggens' Famous Restaurant was in full swing. Numerous staidly respectable family groups, people that I recognized as of the neighborhood; parties of laughing, upright-appearing young men, clerks living in hall rooms, I imagine; in couples and alone several snuffy old gentlemen; a pair of maiden ladies (beyond doubt),

whose lives I reflected much upon day by day; a rough customer or two; and the usual, unaccompanied, so obviously self-respecting young women; these filled to crowding the steaming, clattering little place.

"Roast lamb!" in a mighty voice Mr. Nuggens in the next room yells down his dumb-waiter shaft.

"Rice puddin'," calls neatly-garmented Dolly, going out with an armful of plates.

The front door opens. At first in rushes only a gust of winter; then slowly out of the night a grotesque apparition appears, swaying from side to side; an inebriated scare-crow, a bit of the flotsam of the great city. Mr. Nuggens has seen him through the connecting archway. There is a rush like a hurricane; a flash of a scuffle; the door bangs to like a cannon. There is no scare-crow; there is the short, portly, important figure of Mr. Nuggens (seen from the back), in his white coat and apron, still roaring enough to deafen one: "Get out of here! Get out! Get out!"

Mr. Nuggens faces about, still quaking with indignation. His face is bloodshot with rage. Beads of perspiration glisten upon the dome of his forehead. Mr. Nuggens is a violent man; he

has, you know, that hot blood of the South. "The idea of a character like that coming in here!" His fist trembles. "This is a place for ladies and gentlemen," he says. "For ladies and gentlemen I mean to have it. There is no place in New York City where better people go than right here. I don't care where it is, Waldorf or anywhere." Mr. Nuggens had in his soul that last mark of a great artist. He believed in the masterpiece he had made with the sublime arrogance of a Benvenuto Cellini.

The chestiness of Mr. Nuggens' pride somewhat mollifies his chesty wrath. He softens quickly; and, perhaps with the idea of doing something in reparation for the disagreeable disturbance, he takes up my butter plate and asks me kindly if I will have more bread and butter.

I should have liked to sit a little while and read my paper, but I felt this might be obstructing business. As I came before the cash register to pay my check a man had just asked Mr. Nuggens if he could "change a ten." Mr. Nuggens, after some rather violent tugging at the boot, as the senior Mr. Weller would have expressed it, produced an obese wallet of bills. Mr. Nuggens informs me that his family are on a visit to their

old home in the South. By the way, he says, he is thinking about buying a place in the country upon their return. He asks about locations within a radius of an hour from New York. I cannot deny that I felt flattered to be the confidential adviser of a person of Mr. Nuggens' importance. "You've done very well here, Mr. Nuggens," I told him, not without some feeling of pride myself. It seemed to me I had aided and abetted him; it seemed to me I had something to do with this success. "Well, yes," Mr. Nuggens replied, "but this building, of course, is too small and old-fashioned to do much with." In breadth and sweep Mr. Nuggens was Titanic. He reminded me of Cecil Rhodes. In his eyes I saw the dream of the empire builder.

As I walked away I was visited by moral reflections. Mr. Nuggens vindicated strikingly the old platitude, honesty is the best policy. He had been a prodigy of naive shrewdness. His wages had been riches.

* * * *

All things, it seems, like the tides move in an ebb and flow. The seasons wax and wane. The sun rises and sets. The various forms of animal and vegetable life, peoples and nations, and arts

and literatures, have their genesis, their flower, their decadence. There is this rising and falling action in the careers of individual men. Truth to this universal rhythm is a law of the drama. This action may be observed in the destinies of the humble, but it is more striking and tragic when a man rises to fall from an eminence. And a sense in man of poetic justice is soothed when a strong man falls through his own weakness.

One day on my way toward Mr. Nuggens' I became aware, as I approached, of a great commotion proceeding apparently from within the restaurant. Uproar seemed to sweep out through the door in a visible atmospheric disturbance, somewhat as it is represented in the "comics" of the yellow journals. Vehicles in the street paused inquiringly. I saw persons come running from across the way. When I arrived the storm had been spent. Dolly much flurried, was taking off her apron; Kitty vigorously putting on her hat. Both were red and tense. Mr. Nuggens himself was gathering up dishes from the tables, very self-consciously, I saw, ostentatiously, with much clatter. Deep penetration was not required to discern that he was far from calm within. Amid some unintelligible rumblings I heard him mut-

ter, "Talk back to me! Talk back to me! I'm boss here! I'm boss here!" Then as the girls walked rapidly and haughtily out, "I'm boss here!" he burst into a yell. . . .

"No," a few days later said Mr. Baum, the tailor on Bank Street, who presses my trousers, "I quit goin' there. Nuggens he was gettin' too cocky for anybody. He was prosperous too much. Anyhow," he continued, "the place is runnin' down since Kitty left. Nuggens' new girls," he uttered savagely, "are slobs." In recognition of the sympathy existing between us I gave Mr. Baum a cigar; he had created in words for me sentiments of my bosom.

In truth Mr. Nuggens' was not what it was. The changes at first were subtle, rather inexplicable. We now used a less dainty, what apparently was a cheaper, grade of paper napkin. Was Mr. Nuggens in his inordinate ambition beginning to hedge on details of expense? Then followed less fine nuances of moral disintegration. I became convinced that the portions were not so ample. "Things," Mr. Nuggens said, "were going up." We gradually sank. The plate was wearing off the spoons; the fork prongs were bent; the cups began to chip. I became more

and more aware that the food was not so good. Mr. Nuggens said irritably he could never keep a cook. More and more I became aware that the society at Mr. Nuggens' was deteriorating; I reflected one day how of old I had been wont after a solitary day at work to look forward to sharing my table perchance with some fragrant young lady, stenographer perhaps; instead of this was a fellow opposite to me now who blew upon his nail, he had just entered, then bowed his unbrushed head above his coffee, his single dish. Furtively he took some buns from his coat pocket and soaked them in his cup. Between Mr. Nuggens' and the "bread line," evidently, he made his meal.

Mr. Nuggens told me that he and his wife had parted ways. She aggravated him so, he said, he could hardly live.

I pass silently over the line of waitresses that succeeded Dot and Kitty, waitresses who broke dishes, spilled things, stole, lied, swore, got drunk, went to sleep, failed to arrive. It struck me wearily one day that I might have married Kitty. (Things of a character demanding action occur to me when it is too late.) All of these servants I have referred to were, however, seen relatively



in retrospection, exemplars. One morning as I sat to break my fast a caricature out of the pages of "Simplicissimus" appeared before me. This strange creature looked at me with demented eyes. She had, evidently, a difficulty in hearing, and put her ear broadside on close to my mouth. She moved away, when I had ordered, by a series of sidewise plunges, one leg giving away beneath her at every other step. She hit every table between me and the door. Half way out she screamed my order, her voice rose in a shrill, idiotic cry, then broke into a thousand pieces. Her clothes were unbuttoned down her back. She brought in everything wrong, knife and spoon but no fork, butter when I had done, coffee before I began. I ordered buttermilk; she brought me a piece of watermelon. "Is not that rather odd buttermilk?" I said. "I don't know anything about them," she replied, "he buys them all." My playful spirit sank.

She dropped something invariably. A knife striking on its point stood up quivering from the floor. "Well, well," she quavered, "I bet I couldn't ever do that again." . . .

She added up her checks aloud, slowly, in a wavering singsong. In response to suggestions

that she had erred she replied, "Well, we are none of us perfect. We all make mistakes." It required all the support my recollection of Marcus Aurelius could give me to sustain my equilibrium. I reflected in the spirit of the stoic philosopher. All these ill qualities have happened unto this creature, through ignorance of what is truly good and what is truly bad. But I that understand the nature of that which is good, and that which is bad; who know, moreover, that this animal is my kinsman, how can I be hurt?

Nevertheless I thought of myself in the words of Mangan's poem, "Condemned to herd with demons from hell beneath." Why did I not quit Mr. Nuggens'? I tried. I thought of going to board. It had often occurred to me that it might be pleasant to say, "Good evening," to somebody before I began, in response to the dictates of the instinct of self-preservation, to assimilate nutriment. Agreeable it might be to season my meat and vegetables with a little conversation. I had gone so far as to inquire a little about places to board. I even picked out neighborhoods that I thought attractive and within my means, which occasionally I walked about in and viewed with a friendly eye. But, when it came to the point,



how on earth could I leave Mr. Nuggens? I was bound to him with hoops of steel. I was, he told me, his first customer.

As Mr. Nuggens rang up the amount of my dinner and handed me my change, he remarked: "Let me see, you weren't in this morning?" Mr. Nuggens began to suspect, I feared, that I was not the man he had taken me for. I had been truant to him now numerous times. I had felt that Mr. Nuggens had marked my absence. I felt that purposely he refrained, as a point of delicacy, from commenting upon it. I had felt oddly somehow that he intended to appear as though he had not noticed it. I desired it to be evident that I did not believe I was deceiving him, so I said, affecting a gayety: "I've missed you a couple of times lately, Mr. Nuggens." My gayety sounded to me very forced and awkward. "Are you back to stay now?" he asked, pleasantly enough, but I knew he had been wounded.

Mr. Nuggens was getting discouraged. If an opportunity offered, he told me the other day, he would sell out his business and go away; and when a man meditates "going away somewhere," well—then the tale is told.

II

ON EATING DINNER

AS he descended the couple of little steps that lead down to the grill room at Keene's Chop House the melancholy eyes of Mr. Angus Bleak (the celebrated—nay! illustrious, anthropologist) were greeted and caressed by a delectable spectacle: rows upon rows of dapper, happy gentlemen, wreathed in jolly ribbons of tobacco smoke, surrounded by sparkling linen, flashing glass and silver; all engaged in the surpassing pleasures of the table. Beyond—a jovial background of myriads of church-wardens against the wall. Unexceptionable waiters flitted to and fro. The erudite heart of Angus Bleak was uplifted, and he took pleasure in his life. And the striking reflection came to him that dinner, without doubt or exception, was the most remarkable institution in the world.

The joyous grill room, however, (I am sorry to say) appeared to be quite full. As Mr. Bleak



hesitated one of those noble serving men of a superior caste (of a degree of polish to be found in only six eating places in the world) came forward to give him obsequious welcome and to render him useful office. Deftly he convoyed Mr. Bleak to a single remaining unoccupied Windsor chair. As he received the menu card handed him Mr. Bleak's glance played upon the gentleman opposite who shared the little table with him; a very fat man, in a suit of arresting checks and a crimson tie, who wore on his lapel a gorgeous peony. Dinner, the thought occurred to Mr. Bleak, is the most ancient of institutions, far antedating that of the family.

Mr. Bleak began his dinner with a van Courtland cocktail, which, you will recall, was the patrician thing in cocktails at that moment (June, 1914). The desire to dine, so ran his thought, is the first instinct to be aroused in animal life; it is the strongest instinct, demanding gratification preliminary to all others; it persists when all other instincts have subsided, until life is extinct. Mr. Bleak ordered a box of Marquis of Queensbury cigarettes, one of which he lighted before glancing at *The Sketch* while waiting for his soup. But his philosophic mind was elsewhere.



ON EATING DINNER

The ceremony of dinner, was the idea he was revolving, is the most universal rite practiced by man; and its ritual is the most bizarre perhaps of all his curious customs.

Finishing his fish with oyster sauce, Mr. Bleak regaled himself with a cheerful-looking goblet of ale, preliminary to the arrival of a pâté. Probably nothing, he said to himself, is so representative of a man's caste, his character, and his mood, as the fashion in which he eats his dinner. Dinner, too, (Mr. Bleak declared to himself) is the most enduring of human institutions, as it is certain to stand when all else has passed away.

An entrée of attractive appearance followed Mr. Bleak's pâté. And the thought which followed along in his mind was, that the earliest dinner of which there is mention in human annals was a very simple one, but more momentous in its consequences than anything that has happened since. It was unique too (Mr. Bleak reflected) in the extraordinary circumstance that it was served by a serpent.

Next appeared before Mr. Bleak a large, and (to my mind) admirable piece of ham, garnished with spinach and chopped egg. The wisdom of Solomon, mused Mr. Bleak, spoke as to dinners

and their intimate and eternal relation to the most sublime of human passions: "Better," it is written in Proverbs, "is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Mr. Bleak washed down his ham (garnished with spinach and chopped egg) with a slightly tinted effervescent liquid which arrived before him in a distinguished-looking bottle. From its conception, religion (so played his fancy) has in its various forms found a symbolism in the matter of dinners.

Mr. Bleak was embarking upon a plate of mutton very wholesome in effect when it might have been discerned that he had excited some interest in his portly neighbor opposite. This ruddy gentleman was observing Mr. Bleak's outward activities with unmistakable approval. It might also have been perceived by the observing that Mr. Bleak's waiter was somewhat impressed by his appreciative customer. Though Mr. Bleak was seemingly giving his whole attention to a very handsome fowl, he was thinking of John crying in the wilderness and making his dinner (in that locality) of locusts and wild honey. As his fowl was succeeded by a plate of cheese and toasted crackers with an accompanying fresh

bottle, Mr. Bleak asked himself: And from time immemorial has it not been the tradition of hermits and holy men to dine upon figs and thistles?

Mr. Bleak concluded his commendable meal (commendable, in my opinion) with a rich pastry, ice cream, and several demi tasses. To eat a great dinner, he reflected, "to feast" is, in the etymology of the word, simply to keep a festum or festival. And to trace the festivals of the world through all their variations would be to trace the entire history of human religion and human civilization.

After this reflection, Mr. Bleak topped off his festum (as you may say) with a liqueur, and called for a strong cigar. As he lighted this with much care the portly gentleman opposite leaned back in his chair with an air of (how shall I say?) considerable gratification. Mr. Bleak smoked his cigar in an abstracted manner. In fact, his deeply learned mind was now in hot pursuit of his thought. The religious hospitality of savages, he was thinking, is very entertaining to contemplate. He lifted the hand holding his cigar to a point on a level with his face, to steady (no doubt) the flow of the evocations of his parent idea. The Naga tribes of Assam, he recalled,

celebrate their funeral feasts by "blowing," as you might say, the departed to a dinner left upon his grave.

The Karens have annual feasts for the dead, at which they ask the spirits to dinner. The ancient Peruvians had the custom of periodically assembling the embalmed bodies of their dead emperors in the great square of the capital to dine in company with the people. The festivals of the Greeks and of the Romans, the feasts of the Jews, the earlier Christian festivals, the later practices of the Roman Catholic Church, of the Greek Church, and the Church of England, the Mahometan festivals, and the Hindu and Buddhist festivals, furnish innumerable instances of sacramental dinners.

So Mr. Bleak galloped the hobby he had mounted. He concluded his first cigar, lighted another, and requested his check. This, when presented to him, he appeared to audit with close attention. Though actually he was but tracing upon the slip the reflections of his reverie:

Superstition (so this ran) has, so to put it, fed upon dinners. In the Sudan dinner is usually covered by a conical straw cover to prevent the evil eye—of the hungry people who might admire

and covet it. Customs of dining in private and of covering the mouth when dining also are practiced here. Asceticism has perforce been required to be very firm with dinners. The laws of Antiochus Epiphanes that unclean animals might be brought to Jerusalem opened a chance that faithful Jews might eat of such. The attempt to guard one's self was made easier if a number had meals in common. And the Essenes of the last century before Christ—and of George Moore's latest novel "The Brook Kerith"—an ascetic community with puritan and rigoristic tenets and practices, may have received from this idea the origin of their custom to have common meals. Dinners, of course, have played a prominent part in all social codes.

"Waiter," called Mr. Bleak, rousing himself. Apparently he was about to depart. The portly gentleman wearing the gorgeous peony—who had never taken from Mr. Bleak an eye bulging with admiration—evidently could restrain himself no longer.

"Sir," he said, inclining across the little table, "I hope you will pardon me, but you have just taught me a great deal about dinners——" Per-

haps he would have spoken further; his face was all aglow with cordiality.

Mr. Bleak, half risen, arrested himself with much attention to the corpulent gentleman, and relapsed into his chair, earnestly bending forward. "Ah!" he said, "splendid! You have been following me. Have you thought" (elevating his right hand, palm toward the corpulent gentleman) "of Melanesia and Polynesia?"

The corpulent gentleman fell somewhat back, his parted lips remaining open.

"In Melanesia and Polynesia" (said Mr. Bleak) "it is an established rule that men and women should never see each other eat. A man on the Andaman Islands may not eat with any woman other than those of his own household, until he is old. The unmarried of each sex eat by themselves. Amongst the old Semites it was the custom for a man not to eat with his wife and children. In northern Arabia women will not eat before men. Some Southern Arabs (continued Mr. Bleak, becoming more and more voluble) would rather die than accept food at the hands of a woman. Also, a belief is widespread that one should not be seen to eat by anybody."

The corpulent gentleman gasped, and sank

against the back of his Windsor chair. Mr. Bleak's eyes flashed with joyous excitement. He waved his uplifted hand. "I thought," he cried, "I'd surprise you!"

"The Bakairi," he began again, quivering with the intensity of his feeling, then, "Excuse me," he cried; "I've been so rude. I forgot. Waiter!" he called. "Won't you have a cigar, Mr.—Mr. —Mr.—"

"Relish," murmured the fat gentleman; "Kenneth L. Relish."

"Mr. Relish," said Mr. Bleak, "the Bakairi are ashamed to be seen eating or to see others eat. In northern Abyssinia—"

The waiter arrived, but Mr. Bleak with lifted hand held him hushed as he continued:

"In northern Abyssinia people when eating are concealed. At a wedding feast the guests break up into little groups, who eat separately, each group covered by a sheet. The king of Loango covers his mouth with a garment to eat, in order to keep up an ancient rule that none may see him thus. The Sudanese, Mr. Relish, think that disease or death would follow if any one should see them take food. Hindoos do not like to be looked at while eating. It is reported that the Dyaks



withdraw 'modestly' when about to eat. We find one case of people (Kafans) who may not take food without the presence of a legal witness, an adult of the same people duly authorized. Spouses must eat together from the same dish. To violate this rule is cause for divorce. Among the important symbolic acts of marriage in Germany in the early Middle Ages," said Mr. Bleak, moving his lifted hand up and down, "was a visit of witnesses to the spouses to see them eat together——"

"Beg pardon, sir," here the waiter interrupted the torrent.

"The noble Odysseus," said Mr. Bleak, leveling his finger at him, the waiter, "did oft 'comfort his heart with food,' and those among whom he fared were wont to fall to feasting, and 'their hearts lacked not aught of the equal banquet.' Among the——"

"Beg pardon, sir," insisted the waiter, "but ——"

"Stay!" said Mr. Bleak, with much earnestness, evidently grown oblivious of the waiter's function. "Have you," he asked, with a gesture of tapping his forefinger at him, "considered the dinner in literature?"



ON EATING DINNER

"Among the most dainty diners celebrated in story," he persisted, "was the Nonne, a Prioresse, who was of the Aprille party which journeyed to Canterbury." And he intoned (with much unction):

> At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
> She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
> Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
> Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
> That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.

The waiter—though Mr. Bleak grasped after him (thus nearly toppling from his chair)—broke away from the mesmeric spell directed toward him, and hastened aft, with the appearance of one energetically embarked upon a well-defined purpose.

An array of faces of neighboring diners were directed toward Mr. Bleak, and something of a hush fell upon the murmur of fraternal dining about him. He turned again to Mr. Relish. "You know, of course," he said, "that the conquest of the art of eating with contemporary propriety was accomplished by the introduction of forks." Then, becoming conscious of the general attention he had inspired, and (evidently)

assuming this to be occasioned by the fascination of his theme, he addressed en masse those in his immediate proximity, as follows:

"Shakespeare has spoken in praise of appetite, and he created the greatest diner of all time. The great Dean of St. Patrick's presented some startling ideas of dinner in the most celebrated of his pamphlets,—'A Modest Proposal for preventing the children of poor people from being a burthen to their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public,' in which, gentlemen, as you know, he argued that 'a child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.'"

This address seemed to be received with considerable appreciation. The staring faces, blank at first, broke into responsive good nature, and a number of bubbles expressive of entertainment were heard. Mr. Bleak, lighting with gratification, proceeded cheerfully:

"The good Dr. Swift, however, was not alto-

gether original in his idea, as cannibalism dates from the earliest known exstence of man on earth, and, the late Professor Sumner affirmed, may reasonably be believed to be a custom which all peoples have practiced. Though our intense abomination for cannibalism is perhaps the strongest taboo which we have inherited. And" (with a pleasant smile) "to-day the only persons served as dinner would seem to be missionaries."

At this point a stocky figure appeared advancing from the rear, Mr. Bleak's waiter trailing in its wake. Mr. Bleak himself was continuing with mounting gusto:

"A dinner" (he was saying, waving his hand in a sort of salute) "supplies the denouement of a deathless parable, that of the prodigal son. Satan, in 'Paradise Regained,' provides for a temptation in the wilderness: 'A table richly spread in regal mode.' The immortal swineherd, Bo-bo, child of the fancy of the gentle Elia, made an inestimable contribution to the joy of dinners when he so unwittingly stumbled upon the art of roasting pig."

The stocky person, who had paused a short distance from Mr. Bleak while this was being delivered, now advanced to his table. Mr. Bleak welcomed him with an expression of simple pleasure. Cordially including him as a member, and a favored one, of his audience, Mr. Bleak, with a pleasant nod to the stocky man, addressed him particularly:

"The naive humor and the matchless gusto of Frans Hals" (he said) "loved a hearty diner. Lord Byron lordly sang——"

"Beg pardon, sir," began the stocky man, "there's a party waiting——"

Aiming his hand at the stocky man, and striking with it a rhythmic beat, Mr. Bleak determinedly persisted:

"Lord Byron lordly sang:

> That all-softening, overpowering knell,
> The tocsin of the soul—the dinner-bell.

The stocky man flushed as if with some choler, and, stepping forward, took Mr. Bleak by the lapel of the coat, saying: "A party waiting for the table here, and——"

Mr. Bleak automatically arose in response to the physical suggestion offered by the stocky

man, but ceased not to speak. As though conversing familiarly with an old friend, he was saying to him:

"Thackeray was a famous diner, but he knew that there was more than meat to a meal, for would he not 'rather have had a potato and a friendly word from Goldsmith than have been beholden to the Dean for a guinea and a dinner?' "

Mr. Bleak's waiter, hovering about the group, plucked forth from the table his silver platter upon which Mr. Bleak some time ago had absentmindedly placed a bill over his check. Mr. Bleak and the stocky man had begun to move toward the door, his companion's arm linked into that of Mr. Bleak. An agile "omnibus" who had acquired Mr. Bleak's dilapidated hat and ivory-handled stick was endeavoring to present them to him. As he was pressed forward, however, Mr. Bleak, absorbed in his thesis, was continuing:

"Among the most enjoyable of dinners are the extempore kind, such as, you will remember, the Carlyles had the day of their arrival at number 5 Cheyne Row, of which Thomas wrote to his

brother, 'We dined on a box-lid covered with some accidental towel.' "

To the accompaniment of a little buzz of chuckles and joyous comment, a multitude of merry faces set with eager eyes followed the march of the entertaining pair. "He's certainly one good one." This seemed to be the consensus of popular opinion concerning the illustrious (though here unknown) Mr. Bleak. The "omnibus," contriving to get directly before him at length, managed to deliver to Mr. Bleak his hat and cane, which he received as if quite unconscious of his action.

"The folk-lore," said he, pausing in his march, "the history, and the literature—"—here his escort gave him a bit of a forward yank—"of dinners is inexhaustible."

Hereupon Mr. Bleak's waiter reappeared, with his change, which he thrust directly under that gentleman's nose. The alacrity of this act apparently startled Mr. Bleak, a bit of a shock which seemed to have a curious psychological effect. Upon his recognition of the nature of the waiter's action he seemed suddenly to come somewhat "to." He bowed graciously to the waiter

as he returned to him a generous, a handsome, gratuity, then looked about as though for the first time gathering a consciousness of the character of his setting. Then he smiled benignly upon the sea of upturned faces, and spoke again:

"Gentlemen, it has been very kind of you to accord me so much indulgence. It has been a pleasant experience for me, I assure you, to have had the opportunity to review, in the presence of so much sympathy, something of the story of dinners." He paused a second, and then the rapt inner light broke again upon his face. "One should not leave this subject, however," he continued, "without at least a word as to the morality of dining."

The stocky man began to press him backward toward the door. Mr. Bleak heedless, or perhaps oblivious to this, warmed again to his theme.

"That man who from the brunt of the day" (he began) "carries into the dinner hour his grievances, his contentions, his sullenness, his animosities, his jealousies, his lethargy, his vanities—who brings anything there but what good nature he may have, and a desire to lay aside now, for one hour, all that in him is not amiable—that man

loses, as man has ever done, by his own folly. He loses the high good of what a Moral Plan designed to be the pleasantest hour of the day. Other hours" (Mr. Bleak was gradually receding from his audience) "have their sterner duties. The only duty of the dinner hour is to have an ambition to relish and to please."

Mr. Bleak was perceptibly retiring, or rather, being retired.

"At another time of the day" (still came his voice, however) "in the crash of battle, one may be forgiven many things; but at the evening hour—social centerpiece of the day, celebration, frequently, of another reunion of the family met in festivity, a kind of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Fourth of July hour—one's genuine nature is on trial. Watch that man" (said Mr. Bleak from the doorway, stretching forth his arm); "by the way he eats his dinner, much you may know him."

Mr. Bleak (whose name was here unknown) was gone. The tense attention of the company broke into a hilarious babble.

III

HUNTING HACK WORK

THERE is a rather curious occupation which I have followed, with occasional intermissions, for a number of years, that of hunting hack work. The intermissions were periods of employment, which supplied, more or less, an income. If one were of independent means, and might regard hunting hack work as a sport, like golf, or a hobby, like collecting books, or a study, like sociology or psychology, or a form of intellectual diversion, such as the enjoyment of humor, then this occupation would be rich in reward. As a method, however, of attaining to a livelihood I can hardly, out of my experience, hold it in high esteem. Let us regard it, therefore, for the nonce, as entertainment, laden with instruction. For in hunting hack work is to be found much knowledge of the world.

By the term hack work I mean, of course, the humble, obscure, and often arduous chores of the

literary profession. Some literary hacks are very young, and some are very old. For hack work is two things. Oft-times it is excellent preliminary discipline and a stepping stone to a brilliant career; frequently it is an asylum for those who have dreamed their dream. Again, it is the resort of the merely mediocre, who got into it why God only knows. Altogether, it is the harbor of a motley world. As a scene it hath much color.

It would be an entertaining thing to go into the personnel of this industry. Who, for instance, writes dictionaries? "Let's look it up in the dictionary." Nobody questions this omniscient, omnipotent book. Book? It does not seem a book at all, fallible like a book, *written* like a book, but rather it has always been to one, monumental, like the pyramids, the stone tablets, as it were, of the law, like to the word of the Lord. Grave and learned judges deferentially consult dictionaries. The tribe of lexicographers, as I have found it, is a picturesque brotherhood of literary adventurers, intellectual soldiers of fortune. Let me see. There was "old Mr. Sigbee," a veteran Bacchanal, who emptied the office water-jar every morning, and the long-cherished dream of whose bachelor life it was one

day to write a popular song; there was Hail, who knew Oscar Wilde at Oxford, who fought a duel, and, in consequence, fled from England, and who considered all Englishmen over here in somewhat similar case, and inquired whenever he met one why *he* had to leave; there was Neal, who set out to be a Benedictine monk, but decided he did not have a religious vocation; there was a one-time broker, fallen upon reverses of fortune; there was a poet, of twenty-five, author of a slender volume of love verses; there was a socialist, somewhat younger, a contributor to *The Call;* and there, among many more, was "Dr. Tucker," who sometimes was wont to appear about the office in his academic cap and gown. But all things come to an end, particularly employment on dictionaries. And so dispersed is that band, gone its members on their several ways, some of them, doubtless, to jobs on still newer dictionaries and encyclopedias, blown where the wind follows after to the ends of the earth.

But our concern here is of necessity limited to the subject primarily of *hunting* hack work, with glimpses of the army of grub-street personalities in the background, by the way. The commonest way of hunting hack work is by means of "Help

Wanted" "ads." This is a diverting pastime, especially piquant when one is insolvent. There is something pleasantly stirring to the sporting instinct in being informed, on one of the rare occasions when one is "granted an interview," that about a hundred and fifty replies to the ad were received, and that after oneself "only seven more" applicants are to be seen. On an average, about a couple of hack work want ads may be found in the New York papers every Sunday; sometimes one or two during the week; on particularly good Sundays as many sometimes as four or five.

The sort of hack workers most frequently wanted are, first, copy writers for advertising concerns and department stores, and, next, trade journalists. Occasionally a "sober" reporter is required for a nearby country paper, and every now and then an ambiguously worded advertisement appears addressed to "authors and writers," wanted by a "leading" or a "long established" or a "prominent publishing house"; or a "literary worker" is desired at some place which is enigmatic in the advertisement.

Interviews arising from want ads regarding hack work are given in various ways. The pleas-

antest way is the regal way. You have admitted by your reply that you are the type of man sought, "a big man for a big job." You have braved the intimidating warning that your "references will be thoroughly investigated." You have recited, with your best foot foremost, your "experience," and stated your age. The chances, of course, are literally a hundred to one that that is an end of the matter. But by some freak of fortune at this throw the gods are with you. In a dignified letter, having the letter-head of a famous concern, you are told that "your letter in answer to our recent advertisement interests us sufficiently for us to desire to see and talk with you." And you are informed that "the writer will be at the McAlpin Hotel, New York, in Parlor 'C,' second mezzanine floor," on such an afternoon, such a date, at such an hour, and would be very glad to have you call. It is politely suggested that as several other applicants are to be interviewed the same afternoon, it will facilitate matters if each puts in his appearance at the exact hour appointed. Below the signature to this letter are, perhaps, the words, "Second Vice-President."

The position, as outlined to you by two valu-

able-looking gentlemen in the rich seclusion of Parlor "C," is that of publicity man and editor of a house organ for a mammoth automobile manufacturing concern, or perhaps a house making musical phonographs (it matters not to you which) situated a short distance from the city. At the beginning of their examination of you these gentlemen refer to your letter, apparently the top one of a file of a dozen or so which they have. You are allotted evidently about thirty minutes. The man next in order is admitted as you depart.

So promising, perhaps, have you appeared in your interview that you are invited out to the factory to luncheon for further examination, and to be viewed and weighed by the entire General Staff, so to say. Here your qualifications for the position to be filled are, it may be, discussed with engaging frankness before you. One amiable gentleman present is of the opinion that you have had exactly the wrong experience for the place. At any rate, you acquire a documentary form to be filled out with the details of your life; you acquiesce cheerfully in the idea of your taking up residence in this neighborhood; and you forswear any opportunity to write on the side for

any other concern. As the matter now stands, two or three more chosen applicants are to be given the third degree at luncheon. Then, in the course of time, you receive notification that you have or have not got the job.

In piquant contrast to these highly civilized proceedings is the common way of doing; when, being somewhat in luck again, you receive a post-card upon which is scrawled in an illegible hand: "Call about work 5 P. M. Tues." The man who sends out such a communication as this is very likely to turn out to be one who has a stock remark to the effect that: "I always say if anything is worth doing at all it is worth doing well." He is probably "publisher and proprietor" of some one-horse weekly trade paper devoted to the fish business or the canning industry, or something like that. He is in need of a man to fill the position of reporter, editor, proofreader, make-up man, editorial writer, exchange editor, advertisement solicitor, correspondent, and general factotum to check trunks and so on. Salary twenty dollars a week; no opportunity for advancement.

Should you obtain this position you enter an amusing atmosphere. You are likely to be told

at the outset that if you are "bright enough" you can get an editorial out of this or that. You learn, in all probability, that "if you had any sense" you would know better than something or other. You perceive that—if you did not already know—the purpose of a trade paper, like that of any other publication, is to "get advertising." And though you live in daily contemplation of as dull, as barren, as sordid, as limited a mind as it has ever been your felicity to observe, you hear a great deal from this source the words "stupid" and "intelligent." You are called upon to "edit" copy which is so worded that it gives no comprehension at all of what the thought may have been in the writer's mind. Also you discover that no matter how right you get a thing it is sure to be wrong; and you apprehend that in the circumstances it is indeed stupid to be conscientious and intelligent to be perfunctory. And so when the spirit becomes sufficiently heavy you may blithely go on your way, hunting hack work.

One of the most agreeable features of being employed on a trade paper is one's enjoyment of the society of one's colleagues. A particularly attractive type frequently met with is that richly racy character, the hard newspaper man of the

old school: the man who is comfortable at his desk only with his coat off and his hat on; who smokes a corncob pipe; who got his education as, say, a ship news reporter, in a school of hard knocks, profanity and "booze"; whose employer is always the "boss"; whose code of ethics is comprised in the principle to stand by a friend; and whose speech is a weird lingo compounded of the technical terms of printers and newspapermen. To be audience for a season to the talk of such a one is to learn a trade. For him the world is composed of upper and lower case, first and second forms, "quots," reprint matter, "caps," leaders, fillers, captions, heads, cuts, over matter, "live" news, inserts, "obits"; he "rings" his abbreviations, "dummies up," considers the "fold," and writes "lead out column" all the while. The finest specimen of this species of man I myself have ever seen was one who had a delightfully human taste in reading. His favorite magazine in the United States was the *Police Gazette,* and the only English publication with which he was acquainted was *Ally Sloper's.*

"Apply twelfth floor, Monday," is the way some want ads read. With your "samples" of



your work and your letters of recommendation you repair to the place of assignation at the break of the business day, to find a number of your competitors already there before you, and others arriving every moment, a miscellaneous assembly. Perhaps the lot of you are told right off the bat that the position had been filled Saturday; and you file out in groups expressing indignation to each other on the way. Or, happily, you sit along in a row on a bench awaiting your respective turns in the order of your arrival. Sometimes you are admitted one by one to an inner office for examination; again, in the presence of the company a hurried-looking man works you off, standing, at the rate of about one a minute. This person is generally an erratic sort of being, who exclaims: "Salary? Ten dollars a week! Eighty dollars a week! Anything, anything at all! Can you get business?"

In either case, you observe with lively interest those come to pit themselves against you. Usually there is among them one or more of a type depicted with much sympathetic relish in the drawings of Steinlin: a humorous, Bohemian soul, a shabby derelict with a boutonnière manner and unsightly sores on his neck. Usually there

are among them smart youths patently of no experience whatever, whose conception of the way to land a job is by means of glib fabrications. There are, too, invariably, a number of staid, heavy men, with large black moustaches, who look like characters you would expect to have businesses of their own, at least eight children apiece, and certainly nothing whatever to do with the literary profession. Then there are other persons there who look a good deal like yourself.

The different businesses that you may get into, come near getting into, and perhaps do get into, hunting hack work, are richly varied. You are highly likely to get into a crooked business, for one thing. This, let us say, is a colorful episode in your career: Being a man who takes some satisfaction in writing well, you are attracted by an advertisement which calls for one who writes a "fine style." And so you make the acquaintance of a jovial "pirate" publisher, a man whose ideas have a large gesture. With him things are going to be made to hum. Streams of editorials (intimations of a little German sympathy propaganda) and spectacular feature series syndicated in thousands of country papers, perfectly ripping magazines, projects for organizing a tour

of a thousand American editors through the war ruins of Europe, for bringing a thousand European editors to America, and much more. All, however, in embryo. For the present, you do a little research work, what you might call lifting, what your employer calls compilation and revision.

That is, at the reference department of the public library you find a good many early, obscure, and out of the way addresses, pamphlets, and so on, by eminent persons; and by skillful carpentry you construct from these articles purporting to be by Dr. Parkhurst and Andrew Carnegie, and such persons, who, though they never wrote these identical articles, did make every statement in them. Other things of this kind, too, you do. But mainly you discover that there is no honor among thieves. You are never able to get any pay for your stealing. Because "it takes a little time to establish a connection like this," or because your work was so faulty that it had to be rewritten by someone else, who, very probably, also was unable to collect. It is interesting, too, to observe that in the rewriting your work has merely been clumsily marred. At length, you are invited to get a judgment against

your employer, and also, while you are about it, to go hang. As you continue to reply to want ads you have an uneasy feeling that you are giving this gentleman the laugh on you by seeking again and again a position of him.

Nowadays you are very likely, if you are quite fortunate hunting hack work, to go into the motion picture business. Superior picture "corporations" are advertising all the while for bright young men to write publicity matter to be released about the country continually. In such a berth as this you lead a life of intellectual "pep," with quarters just off the Great White Way, your walls laden with likenesses of the stars that are your inspiration, and you learn a language more singular than Roe, Esperanto, or baseballese, the tongue of the screen. It is a job greatly to be coveted, opening a view to riches beyond the dreams of—of—of goodness knows what. Manageresses of picture corporations are wonderful persons, wise in years though golden of hair, business incarnate.

Or you may go into bottling, an interesting study when you come to look into it, and an industry supporting a very considerable periodical literature. Or into the music trade. Are you

ignorant of music? Good! A large man somewhat on the order of our *"Ally Sloper"* friend tells you that he would rather not have one with a knowledge of music as trade journal reporter. Perhaps a student of music would have high-brow ideas, aesthetic sensibilities, not in complete accord with commerce. Or you may go into commerce pure and simple, as exchange editor of the New York *Financial Authority,* the paper whose readers number among them the most prominent business men and financiers in the country, the exchange-editor business being considerably increased here now the war is over. We are no longer a provincial nation, and our exchange editors will give greater attention to foreign countries and particularly to South American countries. As a commercial exchange editor you will find considerable play for your attainments. You are required to be a philologist, to translate your clippings; a clever journalist, to head up your matter; and to have an instinct for business news like a corporation president. Twenty dollars to start.

Or you may be invited to an interview in his bedroom at a hotel with a representative of a Philadelphia concern furnishing an advertising

service for bankers. Bankers are not what they were; they are waking up; dignified traditions of the old school are going by the board. They now advertise. And your shrewd reasoning in a course of writing thrift articles will inculcate in you an admirable virtue. Again, you may go into interior decorating. Perhaps as handsome journals as are to be found, even in Brentano's, are those devoted to the trade in Oriental rugs, cretonnes, tapestries, and Chippendale and Hepplewhite furniture. Or you may go into women's wear. And you will very probably receive among your replies to your answers to want ads illegible and illiterate scrawls from persons who have wild dreams of starting magazines somewhere in the Bronx, and who require editors—to be paid out of advertising which they themselves procure.

He that hunts hack work frequently is one who finds no abiding city. There once was, for instance, a young man who obtained, by a lucky chance, employment as assistant editor of a journal for horsemen, though of horses he knew nothing at all. Here he discovered one day in a desk drawer a bulky manuscript, and having little to do he decided, as he was an editor, to edit it. This he did, apparently, with youthful energy. He

mentioned the little job with some satisfaction to his employer, a fine, portly sportsman with a crimson face and an irascible temper. The young editor explained that the manuscript evidently had been written by a man familiar with horses, but one very illiterate and quite ignorant of literary composition. "Young man," rumbled his emplover, "I would have you understand that I have been through the best veterinary college in the world, and I have been a veterinary myself for over forty years." His wife, he added, was his amanuensis, and he guessed she knew as much about writing as the next one. This assistant editorship came to an abrupt termination.

One diligent in the pursuit of hack work frequently lands what are termed "temporary positions." An annual catalogue is to be made of, say, firms in the building way, and their products. A "squad" of copy writers are got together. Some here last one week, others three; some hang on through the process of "weeding out" for several months until the task is completed. And one or two of the fittest perhaps survive to a permanent position. Intellectual squad work has its distinctive features. One always knows how one

is making out, as on the back of each piece of work done one is required to record the length of time it took him to do it.

Or, a man engaged in "amusement enterprises" (the exact nature of which are not apparent) somewhere along the Rialto, has put together a story of about 20,000 words which he desires to have "elaborated" to run to 60,000 words. This story contains the "facts," what the author wishes to have put into it is "description." The love element as he conceives it is strong, so you must be pretty good at love stuff. There are a number of accidents in the story and you will need to work up suspense. You get the idea. Well, the man to do this work must not want to take home the manuscript to pore over, nor must he make marks on it, but he must have the faculty of dictating rapidly to a stenographer in the office. Compensation one dollar an hour. At the conclusion of an hour or two the author will know whether or not he has got the right man. The "samples" of your work which you have been requested to bring are not found to be impressive. "I can write as well as that myself," is the author's comment. There is no "description" in

what you have to show, simply facts, very like the author's own style.

In the advertising department of a prominent publishing house a copy writer suffers a nervous breakdown and has to have six weeks' rest. You have your wires out everywhere all the while, and you are called as a possible substitute. It is the beginning of the Spring publicity campaign; a man is needed to jump into the breach at once and lose not a moment being broken in. The trouble with you, however, is that it is feared that perhaps you are too literary. There are circulars to be written to appeal to the "man in the street," a person who thinks that books are hard things which he had to read at school. The "blurb" is not dead.

Never say in hunting hack work that you have been a book reviewer or, worst of all, a literary editor. Outside reviewing, by the way, is just about the worst business going. But that, as used to be said a great deal at one time, is another story. Inside reviewing, that is a "desk job," or being a literary editor will put butter upon bread fairly well, while the thing lasts. There are two outstanding features of such positions: they are inhumanly scarce and far between; and the

stigma of having successfully held one follows the hunter of hack work through life, and stands in the way of all later opportunity. Everybody is scared like anything of the literary.

IV

AN ARTICLE WITHOUT AN IDEA

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (if I correctly recall his name), William Makepeace Thackeray (to repeat) one time wrote a book described (in the sub-title) "A Novel Without a Hero." So, of course, you know. And so, too, of course you know that while the thing was a bit new at the time (in 1847, to be exact) that is to-day quite the correct way to write any novel pretending to any distinction. Indeed, the more unheroic your hero (or whatever you call him) the more distinction you may be said to have.

So much by way of leading up to this fact: There is an ancient convention regarding another, and an older form of literature, which still persists. And that is the notion that you should have an *idea* to write an essay, or what is now commonly called an article. Possibly this fact (as I have called it) is a fallacy. It may be that

some (perhaps more than some) of the articles in our magazines do not turn on any idea. (I shall come to the subject of magazines presently.) Any idea, as I was saying, or at least any idea worth mentioning. However, if the writer of an article to-day does not have an idea what he does is this: He does the reverse of the novelist. If our novelist finds that he is getting a hero on his hands he contrives to throw him into a bad light somewhere and so take away the taint. What the writer of the article (with no idea in it) does is to attempt to dress up his absence of thought so that it may look (to some) like a perfectly stunning idea. He wants it to, as we say, make a noise like an idea. I have such a bad name for —I mean I have such a bad memory for names or I think I might be able to recall the titles and addresses of a number of such recent articles. And articles, we observe, are in this like people: it is not always so that a man is great, or wise, or even sensible because he lives in a smart house.

Anyhow, the upshot of the whole matter is this: that I, young and handsome, rich and famous, am now for the first time in the history of the world, according to the best of my knowledge and belief, writing an article (or essay)

frankly and publicly announced by the writer thereof as being An Article Without An Idea. What I am writing is a paper containing a store of what a friend of mine refers to as glimpses into the obvious. It may become the fashion to do this. Things as curious have happened. There, for instance, is the case of contemporary book reviews. But we'll come to that subject presently.

It is said that essays are coming in again. Every once in a while somebody says that. 'Tis like prophecies concerning the immediate end of the world. However, it (either one of these prophecies) may be so this time. Still, as to essays, in view of the economy of ideas now going, as hand in hand we have seen is the case, that likelihood does not seem so probable. Because, whereas you can write an excellent article about something with only one idea, and a pretty fair one (such as this) with no idea at all, to write the best sort of essay, which is about nothing much, you really need any number of ideas.

We are all very much indebted to the month of March. It was, as every child knows, in the month of March that the essay was invented. (I always write much better myself in the month

of March than in any other month of the year.) The year (of the invention), it is hardly necessary to say, was 1571. Don Marquis it was who discovered—I mean a gentleman of the name of Montaigne it was who discovered the process of just putting down ideas, one after another, in such a fashion that they blended into what is called an essay. It is, by the way, when you come to think of it, a curious thing, the relation of the letter "M" to the essay—March, Marquis, Montaigne, and Morley (Christopher).

The reason Mr. Marquis's recently published volume, "Prefaces," is so good a book (as essays) is that the instinctive essayist who proposes to write, say, on the Ten Commandments, begins quite naturally with a disquisition upon the importance of a good shape of human ear. And he concludes, perhaps with some warmth, with a denunciation of shell spectacles. Perhaps I should remark in passing that I recollect nothing in "Prefaces" about either the Ten Commandments, ears, or shell spectacles.

One word more as to essays. The mantle of the illustrious dead is always descending upon the peculiar cove who essays to write an essay. For a considerable spell in this country it was quite the

thing to wrap anyone who announced that that which he had written was an essay in the mantle of Dr. Holmes. Now he is likely to get into the old clothes of Charles Lamb (Oh, Elia, of course!), of "R. L. S.," of the author of "The Reveries of a Bachelor," etc., etc., etc.

This may be said to bring us to the subject of book reviewing, and whether or not it is a good thing for reviews to contain any ideas. No, I'm getting on too fast. I'm quite out of breath. I meant to say, a few lines up, that if I had inadvertently given the impression of winding the mantle of Montaigne about Mr. Marquis I make all possible haste to unsheathe him. For in his own habit he is quite as he should be.

Peculiar thing about newspapers. That is, about their "book pages" and "literary supplements." Lately, more or less lately, there have been popping up here and there about the country, at any rate in the two principal cities, pages and supplements of a good deal of brightness, affairs of something of a rollicking nature, things with some dash and go to them, with a *flair* for the cheer-o. In fine, with jazz. These sheets have apparently caught on considerably. They undoubtedly "get advertising." They presum-

ably "increase circulation." Now the point is as follows: some seven or eight years ago there was in this town a like organ, except that it was much better than any of these later ones. Even so. Or perhaps I think so because that was in my youth, or at any rate in my second youth. However, I refer you to the files. You'll see that it was a real doings, this. It failed. Nobody cared for it. Publishers themselves distinctly did not. Its editor was dropped. It changed its character completely. It is a thing most decidedly to reckon with now, probably the most powerful concern in its field. But it is an altogether different type of thing—and I take it that it couldn't go on at that time as it was. In those days we didn't know the word "jazz," and it seems we didn't know jazz in the fine art of literary journalism when we saw it.

I used to think that editing a magazine was quite a trick. Fell in the other day with a man who edits a magazine. Learned there was nothing to it at all. The way you edit a magazine, it seems, is this: First, you find out who died month after next. Say it was Casanova. Very good. Then all you have to do is to get up a Casanova "number" for month after next. There

are a combination of ways in which you do this. You hire a man to sit down and cook up something about Casanova. Not because there is anything new to be said about the great memoirist, nor because everybody is going to be interested exclusively in Casanova throughout month after next. Not at all. But you have to get up a Casanova "number," haven't you? You sure have. That's the business of being a magazine editor. Then there are a lot of people going round to the library all the while looking up who died month after next. And they all cook up something about old Cas, and send it in to you because they know you'll be on the lookout for it in order to get up your "number." You get bunches and bunches of Casanova stuff. You take a few of these articles for your "number," such as will fit readily into the make-up. And there you are!

But about those book reviews, and whether or not they should have ideas in them, and a sense of the value of the books they discuss, and style in the treatment of all this. I see no harm in it, if the ideas are light, and the sense and style good. I notice, however, that one of our leading magazines has taken up this matter of reviews;



taken it up, as Mr. Montaigne says, in a serious way. And it, this magazine, holds that all entertainment of any kind, all interest whatever, should be taken out of reviews; and then what you have left (this is the great principle of the thing) is just the review, and that's what people want.

V

POSING WAR FOR THE PAINTER

IN any number of ways, as we all know, the Great War lately on was an altogether new thing in the way of wars. One of the most novel features of its unique character, however, has not received any popular recognition. This was the first war that, in a manner of speaking, ever "sat" to the painter for its portrait.

When, of course, the primitive artist first began to contemplate the scene of the world about him he found men fighting. His first commissions were to fashion graceful weapons: spears, daggers, swords. A bit later we find him concerned with commemorating in alabaster the victories of Assyrian kings. To skip along, we recollect that on the metopes of the Parthenon were carved the battles of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ. And, when he got into painting, for ages war, religion and love were the only themes the artist thought worth while. The idea of land-

scape as anything other than background for the spectacle is, of course, a modern invention. And though Rembrandt saw, as clearly as Degas, that a beggar was in himself a human story, the world in general until quite recent days has expected a picture to picture, so to say, something doing.

Nearly all great painters, until almost contemporary times, have painted military scenes: Mantegna, Veronese, Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Durer, Velasquez, Rembrandt, Hals, Rubens, David, Delacroix, Turner,—to name a few at random. And the Royal Academy kind of junk against which Whistler, Manet, and, loosely speaking, the other impressionists, rebelled, largely consisted of "historical" scenes of war, battle "pieces," and the like. Fifteen years ago our own Metropolitan Museum was stuffed with that kind of stuff. And then war, with its picturesque trappings, passed almost altogether out of art, both good and bad, together with all other obviously picturesque subjects, such as religious emotion and the sentiment of love. And the business of the serious painter became symbolized in the obsession of Manet rendering with scientific erudition the changing effect of a hay-

stack in its envelope of atmosphere at different hours of the day.

The old masters, and the near old masters, and the far from near masters of the elder day, though they painted war scenes galore, did not paint a war. That is to say, they told the literary story of a historic episode, *The Surrender of Breda, The March Out of the Civic Guard, Sabine Women Intervening Between Romans and Sabines,* or some such thing. After the thing had been over for some considerable time, in their studios, or at any rate far from the scene, they dressed up their hired models and fabricated the pageant. That some of these set pictures have never been surpassed as passages in paint is quite beside the point. And though Meissonier and his pupils or imitators, Neuville and Dataille, made their prime business the depicting with amazing minuteness and dexterity of anecdotic subjects of the Napoleonic wars, their procedure was the same. On the other hand, while Goya's "Horrors of War" (or whatever precisely the series of lithographs is called) and Callot's minute and intensely realistic engravings of whole armies certainly convey the effect of direct impressions of the scene, these things were "stunts" in the ca-

reers of the artists and present no consistent record of military life.

In fine, while traditionally the artist has been commissioned by states and princes to commemorate their valorous deeds in arms he had never been, as an artist, a soldier. He could, of course, lay down his brush and go fight if he wanted to, otherwise he remained a civilian historian. And in the course of the development of æsthetic theory, and the gradual lessening of the subject of war as one of the major concerns of mankind, the theme of war ceased to attract first-rate talent among painters, and fell to the province of lesser craftsmen, the illustrators. We have had in the United States a very creditable little group of men each with a distinctive *flair* for military magazine-pictures. Those of us brought up on our standard magazines recall with a kind of affection the sterling work in this field of such entertaining instructors of our youth as T. dé Thulstrup, Howard Pyle, F. C. Yohn and Frederick Remington. With the rise of pictorial journalism, made possible by the introduction of rapid and inexpensive processes of reproduction, there came to pass, too, in the continuance of sporadic outbursts of war, a press figure famil-

iarly known to us all as "our special artist at the front"—a figure of a highly popular kind, though, as in the case of H. C. Christy and the Spanish-American War, not infrequently one whose affinity with his subject has not been particularly conspicuous.

The late war was not in anything more unlike any other war than in its relation to art, both the art of literature and that of painting. Most of the authors of the world became soldiers, and, it was a current witticism to say, most of the soldiers who were not authors before the war were authors then. And the "art artists" (as they have been so aptly described) were not only at the Great War but in it, the real artists, that is, of England and Europe. There has never been anything at all like the files of *L'Illustration* between 1914 and 1919; and a distinguished American painter and critic declared that the pages of this journal gave a better idea of the war than everything else about it put together.

No writer has been able to make those who have not been there actually *see* the war, as one sees the human scene about him at home. It is beyond the power of the written word to evoke before the eye the mighty, sombre and malign

quality of the battle-field landscape as a whole, or the daily life of troops in their habit as they lived, down to the last details of the cut of their coats. And reams of photographs, we know, cannot with even a distant approach to adequacy tell the tale, because, wonderful as many of the photographs of this war are, the camera cannot feel. Only the artist can show the visible scene in the light of the spirit in which it was lived. Unlike the camera, his is the power to seize upon those things before him the interest of which is universal and eternal, and to let drop away those things which are ephemeral and accidental. He does not merely draw ruined churches and houses, great guns being aimed, guards and lorries, doctors and wounded men. His is the mission of making visible by his art to those remote from the scene and to distant ages the staunchness and patience, the faithful absorption in the next duty, the extraordinary humor, the standards of comradeship and good nature—all the strains of character and emotion that go to make up the temper of a great army in the field. He does not merely draw armed figures in the act of proceeding across a plain; he paints moments of transfiguration, when all the glow of courage that

has been banked down and husbanded through months of waiting and guarding, bursts, at a word of command, into flame.

One of the most fascinating things about the return of first rate art to the subject of war was that it returned shorn of the academic conventions of pomp and panoply characteristic of the old, set battle pieces and stage-set scenes of surrenders. It returned with all the knowledge acquired in its evolution away from the pictorial picture and literary theme and painted not show pageants but, with its new fidelity to visible facts, the actual circumstances of the war.

Men of ability of a very high rank were painting for her France's part in the war. Among the "official" artists with the French armies were François Flameng, Lucien Jonas, Georges Scott, named in the order of their importance, all of whom did perfectly corking things, of soldiers in action and in portraits of generals. Though doubtless the best known to Americans of the French war artists was Charles Huard, Official Painter to the Sixth Army of France, who has twice been to this country, and whose vivacious and distinguished illustrations first to the magazine articles and recently to the war

books of his wife, Frances Wilson Huard, have had a wide currency among us. Among other French artists who have done notable work of enduring value are Paul Sabatier and Charles Hoffbauer; the latter of whom has lived much in the United States; is a member of the Players Club; and, so the story goes, was down in Virginia, or some other Southern State, painting a decoration for a court house when his call to the colors came, when, so had he kept himself in readiness since his term of military service, the war found him with even his boots greased.

Everybody probably knows and has enjoyed the work of Captain Bruce Bairnsfather, a genius in his way, the Phil May of the war, and of an army that certainly required a Phil May. Among British official artists were Frank Brangwyn, Mac Vey, and, particularly worthy of his task, Muirhead Bone, an artist of very considerable power, with a sheer weight of impressiveness that is truly stunning.

At the request of General Pershing for eight artists for the American expeditionary forces, the War Department some time after we entered the struggle ordered a committee on selection to be formed, C. D. Gibson, chairman, and this com-

mittee chose the men who were sent to make drawings and paintings of the scenes where the American army was fighting, and whose work until peace came is to be preserved by the Government as part of the historical documents of the war. These eight men, commissioned with the rank of captain in the engineers, were Ernest Peixotto, Wallace Morgan, J. André Smith, Walter Jack Duncan, Harry Townsend, Harvey Dunn, William J. Aylward, and George Harding.

What they have done with the war remains in full to be seen. At any rate, there is no record in the annals of art of any other group of young men having had so great an opportunity.

VI

LITERARY VISITING IN ENGLAND

WELL, I had my hair cut in one of those lady-like "hairdressers' shops," with the luscious wax busts, the feminine combs and curls in the window, and started out.

I had put in an industrious and highly entertaining day writing to people that didn't know that I had arrived. And that I should like to look at them. Being a man of letters myself in a humble way, that is an obscure journalist in New York.

Now enough has been written about Mr. Chesterton, one would think. But little or nothing has been said about his house. And, regarded as a garment of his mind, a man's house, certainly, is as interesting as his nose, and as indicative of character.

The little parlor in which you find yourself at Beaconsfield has, first, a good deal of English chintz in it. You have doubtless put up at some

of those neat, old-fashioned inns of the English countryside. In the parlors of those inns, you recall, were stuffed birds in glass cases, gaily-flowered wall-paper, much brightly-painted china, a miniature tin house (such as you had not seen since you were a small child at home), the occupants of which, a little tin man and woman, foretold the pending weather by their position at the two little doors. I do not positively remember any of these identical things in Mr. Chesterton's parlor; nevertheless, the general effect as it remains in my mind was very like the gay simple, little parlors of those quaint, old, very English inns.

Next I was shown the "studio," a clever contraption across the road. When the studio had been finished, I learned, it was not known what could be done with it, until it was discovered that it was a good place in which to give dances and amateur theatrical entertainments. "Do you believe in God?" Mr. Chesterton inquired at the gate; "for that is a very important thing," he said. "I do," I replied. "You must come to see me again," was then my parting word from the grand young man of England.

In one of the most delightful books in the

world, by the way, the buoyant manner is at times something like this: Now, I knew a man, and he did this and that. And I knew another man, and he was thus and so. "The Path to Rome" is the name of this book, and it was written by Hilaire Belloc. In it there is mention made of a very fine man. No reader could ever altogether forget the single paragraph about one very personable character. He was *a large, laughing man* (the author says), with tossing hair, who worked late at night, and was very fond of the society of his friends, and talked continually. And that, without doubt, is the most inspired description that has ever been given of G. K. C.

As you continue on into the old village of Beaconsfield the first public-house you enter is the "White Hart." "Mr. Chesterton lives in this village, I believe," you very likely say to the publican. "Oh, yes," this personage replies; "he comes in here every day or so. Yes, he doesn't care where he goes. Gets his ideas in here, he does. Sits over there on that bench in the evenings, smokes his cigar—very fond of cigars, he is—and laughs like fun at all the chaps say. He may be in presently now." Some of the "chaps"

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are there, several of the yokels from whom *Punch*, too, gets many of its ideas.

At the "Plough," next public-house on the way, the same conversation would occur.

Near to "Overroads," Mr. Chesterton's residence, in the village church "Lies interred All that was mortal of the Rt. Honourable Edmund Burke," and in the churchyard is buried Edmund Waller. Disraeli, you remember, was Earl hereabout. I did not have time the day I was there to visit "Milton's cottage," seven miles away. To a gentleman walking in the neighborhood of the railway station I made my remark concerning the prophet of this country, whom I had just seen. And I got quite a rise out of this gentleman. "Oh," he exclaimed, "he's a wind-bag. We don't reckon him much round here. He can't reason logically." And he was very urgent that I should visit the little Friends' burying ground at old Jordan's Meeting House, not far from Beaconsfield through country lanes, where William Penn lies under a very modest stone.

One of the pleasant peculiarities of London is that a place is said to be "in" a street which it is not on at all. Frequently this is a considerable convenience. For instance, you do not know

where Essex street is, but you know quite well how to get to the Strand. And the address of the *New Witness* is something or other Essex Street, Strand. It is in a very modern building. There is an old-fashioned lift there. The late Cecil Chesterton lived, when at business (or did before the war), in a microscopic office which overlooks the Victoria Embankment Gardens and a bit of the Temple. "Yes, isn't it a jolly place?" he said. A roly-poly little man, with merry eyes and a grin, a wilted collar and a very imperfect shave. Evidently shy when in the presence of powerful and impressive persons. He stood over against his bookcase all the while, sucked at an empty pipe, which he made repeated efforts to light, and cast about in his mind for something to say. A happy idea coming to him, he asked how Mr. Roosevelt was. He was evidently relieved when I took my departure, though he earnestly urged me to come again.

Among the people I ran across in "Who's Who" was Arthur Rackham. I thought I might as well go to see him. I'm glad I did. Mr. Rackham wrote to apologise for a delay of about twenty-four hours in replying to my letter. He lives in a delightful house tucked away in some

kind of Gardens in South Hampstead. He was eating dinner when I got there; supplied me with books, cigars and cigarettes while he returned, as I insisted, to finish his meal. Very affable English gentleman. Did you know that his wife is an artist, too? Mr. Rackham is a gnarled-looking person. He looks, in this respect, somewhat like one of his own imaginative conceptions of a tree, containing in its fibres the features of gnomes and goblins. Intensely interested in, and sharply watchful of all the details in the reproduction of his pictures. Produced a letter from Mr. Heinemann as an exhibit in a discussion of the question: when is paper white? Was more familiar with the publishing business in New York than any other person I saw in London. Most of them knew no more about us over here than a goat. Said he never read criticisms of his work, or reviews or notices or whatever you call 'em, as, dealing with things he had done in the past, they only switched him off the problems before him. Read a letter from a young American lady, art student, who was coming to see him, apparently very much in the same way that I had. Came with me as far as his gate. Said gaily, "Some day I'll knock at your door in New York."



LITERARY VISITING

I met a man in London who declared that he had never tasted beer, so I had tea with him in his garden. He has a vivacious French wife, a house of æsthetic atmosphere with Durer prints all about, two small children who recite impressionist verse, a grey cap and a suit to match (with trousers frayed at the bottom), a reddish brown beard which sweeps his chest, features of high refinement, a dignified presence, courteous manners, a mild eye, a soft voice, an intellectual mind, and the name of Sturge Moore. He looks, in short, just like the photographs of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore: and he turns his head very seriously whenever he looks at you.

As he lives just across the street from John Masefield, we went over there. Mr. Masefield had told me by postcard (quite a habit they have over there of writing on postcards: they frequently put things on postcards that you would secure in a registered letter) that he was off on a far journey (they are continually just off for somewhere, those English). So we could only look over his house, and a great deal of new Wedgewood china which was there. His house, in the pleasant and quiet residential district of Hampstead, is that of a gentleman in comfort-

able circumstances who makes a great point, in his surroundings, of nice taste.

I did not see Mr. Shaw, because he did not reply to my letter concerning the matter.

At the Reform Club, in Pall Mall, tall, august gentlemen, Englishmen every inch down to their grey spats, aristocratically stooped, presumably, beneath the weight of government, pass before you as you wait in the spacious hall for the arrival of Mr. Belloc.

My grandfather, when I was a small boy in Indiana, used to wear boots made out of the same sort of leather that harness is made of. These were blacked with a kind of stove polish. He used to wear quite round cuffs with a high polish, fastened with big, dark stone cuff-buttons. His shirt was of the "boiled" variety, with a stiff, slick bosom. He wore a heavy ready-made tie, stuffed with cotton. Now I do not say that the costume of Mr. Belloc, when I saw him, was identical with that of my grandfather. But in general effect his get-up was of that same period. As a writer, I think it will not be denied, he writes the best English now going in England. As a man he impressed me more, with his hearty, commanding character, than any one I saw in that country.

VII

AN AMOROUS CONSPIRACY

I KNEW Murphy for a long time only as a lodger in the house who studied the bass-drum. I knew this very well. Murphy learned, through Mrs. Meyer no doubt, that I occasionally wrote for the public press,—our landlady is a veritable newspaper of the entire neighborhood gossip, rather inclined toward the policy of "yellow journalism," and has a regular circulation throughout the house. Now Murphy, it transpired, harbored a fondness for a young woman who was sojourning in a distant town. This fondness, according to Murphy's account again, was reciprocal. The young woman in question, according to Murphy's account again, was "edicated to a turn." Murphy, by his own confession, unfortunately is not. Murphy naturally desired to be in communication with the object of his fondness, but the knowledge of his own literary shortcomings gave rise to a fear within

his breast that his epistles would not be calculated to impress favorably a young woman "edicated to a turn." Upon receipt of Mrs. Meyer's information Murphy put his head together, so to speak, and saw a grand way out of the difficulty. I was the very man for the job.

Murphy immediately cultivated my acquaintance. I suspected there was an ax to grind, the man became too suddenly friendly; but I could not imagine what it was. Finally, after some embarrassment and considerable flattery, Murphy came out with his proposition.

At first I would have none of it; it struck me as obtaining a young woman under false pretenses. Murphy misunderstood my objections entirely. He essayed to ride me down with promises of great worldly reward should my efforts prove satisfactory. Then, finding this somewhat to his bewilderment of no avail, he changed his tack and pleaded that he would do as much for me were positions reversed.

With regret I must own it, the fact that I have too seldom been able to say "No!" is a great reason for my residing on Broome Street, in this city of New York, at present. I have stood better in the world,—but that is not this story. I

reflected, that this young woman would soon return, when Murphy could woo her in person; that the fondness was already mutual; that I could train myself down to Murphy's level and need not so captivate her by my own superior elegance of style and address that she would be disappointed in her lover when she returned to him; that I could do the man a favor; that it need do the young woman no harm; that it certainly could do me none; and at length—much as I afterward regretted it—I agreed to write his billet-doux. At this decision Murphy's joy was so apparent that I felt ashamed of myself. I do not know why, but that is a sensation I often experience without what I consider good cause; sometimes when a beautiful woman smiles upon me, sometimes when I am inconspicuously present where a man that I am in no way related to makes a fool of himself.

At first Murphy was able to give me no instructions in the matter. The whole business was left entirely to my judgment, and Murphy's only solicitude was that his letters should be, as he said, "slick." His heartfelt earnestness on this point was so great that I felt ashamed again.

The text of the first letter met with Murphy's

commendation. After reading it over several times, by whispering it to himself, he remarked that I had "got the idear." But—and here his happy face clouded—the "penmanship" was not up to his idea of what in a document of this nature it should be. I was forced to admit that the handwriting was not so "slick" as it might be, but it was the best I could do; and, I said, I was afraid we should have to rely solely on sentiment. Not so! Murphy intended to do this thing properly, and it would be a shame to fall down (it was so he put it) on penmanship. He brightened again. He recollected he had a friend, a bartender, who made a hobby of this identical thing, penmanship, and who had taken several "courses," Murphy said, in the art.

This man's skill and reputation were so great, I was informed, that he was employed as an advertisement by the house for which he worked, solely on the strength of his ability in this direction. To his friend, then, Murphy would go and have the letters copied in a style befitting their destination. I of course saw that this would be a prodigious deception, but I was prevented from offering any objection by several reasons. For a moment my tongue was palsied with admira-

tion for the artist in the man who was no artist. It would be extremely difficult, no doubt fruitless, to explain to Murphy's genius, (a lover to whom it was easily seen all was fair in love or war) clear back from the beginning, the doctrine of right and wrong. How, too, could I account for my part in the affair being any more justifiable than that of the distinguished penman? Was it any more justifiable? Chuckle-headed, pliable imbecile that I am! Common cat's paw! In truth a fool and his foot are soon in it. Murphy was gone. I endeavored to conciliate my conscience with reflection: this, at any rate, was a deception to which I was not a party.

Upon Murphy's return with the letter the next day, after it had been treated by the expert penman, I was of course prepared for something very fine. Murphy was that kind of a man, I was rapidly coming to see, who does nothing by halves; obviously he had entered upon the chase in earnest and he became fired, apparently, with the laudable ambition of getting up as "slick" a bunch of letters as ever wooed the heart of woman. Presumably with this idea in mind he had, assisted by the taste of his friend the bartender, made purchase of some stationery. No more

beautiful paper, I was obliged to accede, was ever to be had for love or money; and, I felt, no one in the wide world but a bartender, and no bartender but an expert penman, would ever have selected it if it were.

The chirography completely surpassed my highest expectation. It was a revelation, and to borrow Murphy's delighted expression, it certainly "knocked the socks off" of anything of the kind I had ever seen before. That a human creature could create such illuminations with simple pen and ink was marvellous. It was the gentleman of the old school style of penmanship carried to excess. The up strokes were amazingly fine, and the down strokes as amazingly heavy; the capitals were dreams of flourishes, flourishes that went round and round, like pin-wheels, and intertwined and encircled each other; in some places they were as thin as a hair, and in some places as broad as an eighth of an inch; they mixed up with the small letters, and lost themselves among them, and reappeared further on down the line. "It is made with the whole arm movement," explained Murphy, and I believe him. In a mental picture now I can see that talented and accomplished man push back his cuff and sway his whole

arm from the shoulder, around and around, preparing to begin. Murphy saw with considerable gratification that I was properly impressed, and further explained that his friend had derived his culture from "Professor Hassell's Complete Compendium of Elegant Writing;" and was, Murphy declared, "the best in the game."

In the course of a few weeks, with shame I confess it, I drafted several letters for Murphy, always with the guilty conscience that I had criminally conspired with a penman bartender and a man who studied the bass-drum falsely to ensnare an unsuspecting young woman; but I was led to believe that the heroine of the tale would soon return, and being in the unhappy business believed it would be better to compose the few letters desired of me in as wholesome a manner as possible, now that I was in, than to balk and quarrel about it.

The bartender copied these letters in due order, and I could not but suspect that he was urged on to do his best by promises of great reward from Murphy, the extravagance and "elegance" of his wondrous style so increased; flourishes now frequently became so voluminous that they took on the form of unknown birds and oth-

er creatures not of this world. The tremendous exercise of such talent and skill I felt could hardly have been inspired by friendship alone.

The answers from our correspondent were read aloud to me by Murphy; simple, modest, not uninteresting letters they were, and, indeed, did imply that, at least, their author did not frown upon the inimitable and irrepressible Murphy. At times I had a disturbing sense that this lady was not so naive as she might have been; in her most caressing sentences to Murphy I seemed to scent a delicate aroma of irony. I felt I had come to flee when none pursued.

It now devolves upon me to introduce my friend MacKeene, and in order to explain his attitude toward the wretched affair and to account for his being in it at all it is necessary for me to throw some light on his extraordinary character.

MacKeene is described by Mrs. Meyer as being a "studium" and "poor as a church member." The first appellation is true—he is a student of engineering; the simile is rather baffling, but that he is poor I fear is true also. MacKeene is a philosopher. Many men of little business, I have observed, are philosophers. I became acquainted with MacKeene when I invited him in one even-

ing to share the warmth from my fire—he having none—and he proved a treasure to me during many long winter evenings. I offered him a smoke and was instantly attracted to the man by his story of the cunning stratagem he employed to break himself of the habit of smoking to excess.

MacKeene had devised sundry and divers tricks to accomplish his end, all without success; the latest maneuver against the enemy consisted in his buying the most expensive cigarettes he could find with the idea in mind that the wanton and profligate extravagance of smoking them up too rapidly would materially reduce his consumption of the weed; then if the campaign were successful he would not increase his expense in the long run, but when the habit was more under control he could reduce his expense even below the present by returning to cheaper brands. Such ingenuity as this was deserving of reward, but alas! it failed from the start, and left MacKeene a poorer and a no more temperate man.

Upon his departure the first evening of our acquaintance I invited MacKeene to drop in again at any time, and since that evening he had religiously and with amazing regularity shown up at

precisely a quarter to eight o'clock every Friday night. The greatest charm of the man consists in his ability to talk for hours together upon any topic whatever, and upon an astonishingly irrelevant miscellany of topics. After our formal greeting he seats himself comfortably in a chair, lights his first cigarette, and begins a wandering discourse, which requires no comment or reply, and which, I believe, he utters more for his own entertainment than for mine. It is a most interesting and unaffected exhibition of the play of the entire mind of an idle man. My presence gives him an excuse for talking, and it appears to afford him satisfaction to form his thoughts into spoken words. It seems to me that he must have threshed out most of the subjects known to man in the time that I have known him, but he appears to be in no danger of running dry and becoming an empty vessel; he always turns up fresh and smiling with a new stock, usually totally different from all the other.

Among his other pronounced characteristics is an assiduous striving on his part to increase his vocabulary. I am always made aware of any of his new acquisitions in this direction by its frequent repetition during an evening, the loving

way he appears to dwell upon it, to hug it to his heart, allow it gradually to mount in his throat, roll it in his mouth to suck its flavor, and send it forth to watch it tenderly and admiringly (like a fine ring of tobacco smoke) until it loses itself in the flow of speech that comes after. I relish this new word myself. It is like a play; it thrills my soul, and I sigh when it is gone,—but I know it will come again with many others before the night is past.

It has never been my fortune to see a man that enjoyed the show of life more than does MacKeene. He reads newspapers with a relish that is positively amazing; he smacks his lips over them; their contents are to him the headiest romance. MacKeene goes to the finest theatre in the world every evening when he reads his penny paper. The anxiety with which he awaits the account of each new murder, swindle, election, or disaster, or especially interesting marriage or divorce; the mental agility with which he pounces upon it, the astonishing variety of points of view he can take of the thing, and the application with which he follows it to the very end, are delightful to behold.

One thing only I held against MacKeene. He

spent too much time, I thought, down stairs playing cards with Miss Meyer as a partner. Unfortunately I do not care for cards myself.

One evening, to return to the story, I was considerably surprised upon answering the heavy knock at my door to usher in Murphy with MacKeene in tow. This was not MacKeene's "night," and he had never before called in company with Murphy. The circumstance, however, was soon explained; Murphy came to the point at once. It appeared that he had of late been audience to some of MacKeene's eloquence and had marvelled greatly thereat. MacKeene's florid vocabulary had completely captivated him, and, practical man that he is—even in love—he saw an opportunity, a thing he never neglects, to turn it to advantage in the case in hand. It would make a valuable addition to his battery. He had enlisted MacKeene's services, and MacKeene, of course, had welcomed the project with avidity; it was a thing after MacKeene's own heart, and he was prepared to enter upon his duties with enthusiasm. Thus MacKeene became an accomplice.

Murphy apologised to me for calling MacKeene into consultation and explained that he

thought MacKeene might be able to "help me out" by "touching the letters up a bit," and that "he might be able to ring in something interestin' and amusin'." I had not the slightest doubt of his ability to do this and was at first greatly inclined to withdraw myself entirely in favor of MacKeene. Then I saw that that would eliminate the only element of conservatism in the corporation and would either wreck the affair entirely, or do worse; so I decided to remain in, as a sort of ballast—the Lord only knows (as we say) what the riotous MacKeene would have done, given free rein—and I prayed for the quick return of that distressing young woman.

By way of an initiatory move MacKeene persuaded Murphy, who was gluttonous after any new frills, that it was the proper thing to seal delicate correspondence with wax. Murphy no sooner heard this than he set out hot foot after some; and the next letter was baited, and weighted, with about a quarter of a pound (to speak figuratively) of that article. He next induced Murphy to have the bartender design a monogram to be stamped at the head of his stationery. In the manufacture of this hieroglyphic the bartender laid himself out, so to say, to that extent that I

fear he severely wrenched both his arm and brain.

When MacKeene assumed his position as high lord-toucher-up he immediately called my attention to the errors in English which I had purposely introduced, after carefully studying Murphy's eccentricities of speech, and prepared to "ring in" some brobdingnagian words that were well calculated to give the lady paralysis, together with a gorgeous array of "interestin' and amusin' " copy quite as extraordinary. Then in compliance with Murphy's desire that we "get 'em a little thicker," by which I presume he meant more intimate or affectionate, he prepared a garden of sentimentality which I believe made his mouth water as he wrote it. There is no doubt that MacKeene was enjoying this as he had enjoyed few things in his lifetime.

"MacKeene, old man," I said mildly, "this won't do at all. We must not so overshoot Murphy; we are not litterateurs in this thing; we are simply Murphy's interpreters."

An expression of the greatest wonder overspread MacKeene's countenance.

"What do you want to throw the game for?" he said; "don't you want the man to get the girl? Do you mean to play the traitor to him?"

Firmness is not my forte; but I saw I must for once be firm.

"My dear MacKeene, this is an all-round wretched business; we are all a lot of dastardly scoundrels for being in it at all, and now we must try to be as righteous as scoundrels can be. I, for one, didn't undertake to win the girl at all; that was not the proposition. If the girl has the sense to be worth winning, and I think she has," I said, "she will not be hoodwinked by any such insufferable rot, supposed to come from our illiterate and unpoetical friend Murphy, as this you suggest. Murphy could not say these things in the wildest delirium-tremens. If Murphy is expected to talk like that for the rest of his life it will kill him. But the girl doesn't expect him to talk like that, and very probably would fear for his sanity if she supposed he ever did. The only way to be loyal to them both is to write somewhere near the way Murphy would."

This point of view at first took all the "sport", as he said, "out of the job" for MacKeene; it was a sorry blow to his spirits, but he agreed that I was right. After a period of dejection his interest revived and he fell to studying Murphy's style. The result was caricature of dialect as

outrageous in another direction as his former efforts were in their way.

Murphy was blissfully unconscious of any break in harmony in the ranks and delightedly considered the chase in full cry—the hare, the huntsman, and the pack of hounds.

"Now," he remarked, "we've got the thing down to a science."

Was ever such lover as this!

"Some of these letters," he declared, "are good enough for publication."

Then one glorious day Murphy brought an end to the farce by announcing his intention of immediately going on to see the heart of the whole trouble, the young woman herself. When I saw him attired for the journey I was led to believe that he had judiciously consulted the taste of his friend the bartender in regard to his habiliment. I experienced an enormous sense of relief at being so well out of such a miserable matter and I resolved that this should be another lesson to me, and that however much I might continue to err in the future I would confine myself henceforth and forever, at least in all commerce of the heart, strictly to my own correspondence. In order to satisfy myself the more of the firmness of

this resolution I immediately turned my attention to my own heart's affair and doubled my time and efforts on a little correspondence of my own. The Lord tempers the wind to the shorn lamb: I had found in the humble world which had received me a young person—but I digress.

Murphy was gone a considerable while, and I had greatly recovered my self-respect, when one evening, as I was drowsily listening to a harangue delivered in my apartment to no one in particular by Mr. MacKeene, we heard a heavy sort of skip-and-a-jump step ascend the stair, make for my chamber door—and Murphy entered without the formality of knocking. His get-up was even more amazing than when he departed; his face was very red, and was wreathed in the most felicitous smiles imaginable. He accepted my invitation to be seated, lighted a cigar in much the same manner, I believe, as that in which a royal king in a story would quaff his royal nectar, crossed his legs as though they were articles for which he held the tenderest affection, rubbed his hands around and around, and never left off smiling all the while.

MacKeene surveyed this interesting spectacle with the keenest delight, I with considerable as-

tonishment, though I foresaw the news that was about to be broken, and, being a lover at that time myself, my heart beat in sympathy with that great engine of Murphy's.

"Well," said Murphy at length, "well, I've won the stakes."

MacKeene arose, with the appearance of twinkling all over, and shook him warmly by the hand; I, that is in so far as the latter part of the action was concerned, did likewise.

"Now, lads," said the lucky man, "we've got to all hurry and get ready for the hookin' up. We'll flip up a piece of money to see which of you fellers is to be best man an' which is to give the lass away. You fellers have stood by me in this deal, I couldn't a' got away with it without you, an' I want you to be in, up an' foremost, at the finish."

MacKeene received this prospect with great relish.

"All arrangements is made," continued Murphy, "minister paid, an' all that sort o' thing, and it's to be pulled off down here in the parlor next Saturday, four o'clock in the afternoon. Then the racket lasts till Sunday morning."

I felt suddenly a little faint.

"Here!" exclaimed MacKeene.

"Yes," Murphy replied. "Where else? Ain't this the girl's home?"

"What!" cried MacKeene, a strange expression coming into his face. "What girl—who—where—who?"

"Why—didn't I tell you?" said Murphy. "Miss Meyer. She's the queen!"

My gaze was fixed on MacKeene's face during Murphy's speech and I remember it did not occur to me that it was at all curious that he turned somewhat pale, that his eyes opened wide, and that his jaw dropped with a jerk. Nay! for a moment it seemed to me the most natural thing in the world that we both should be thus affected.

Then he caught sight of my face; he discovered the comedy, and was himself instanter. I collected myself while he was congratulating Murphy for the second time, and was able to bow Murphy out of the room with fair grace.

A moral conscience seemed to have awakened in MacKeene. In a strangely humble voice, he said, "Damned if I don't believe she got the best man!"

Then he added with a wan, ironic smile, "I wrote her all about it; thought it was a great joke, you know."

He extended his hand. In silence I clasped it.

VIII

THE "PUB"

"IT'S a nice day for Ascot," said the barmaid.

"It is, indeed, miss," I agreed.

"Wasn't it awful at Whitsun!" said the barmaid.

"Awful," I replied.

"Good day, miss," I said, and lifted my hat.

"Good ahfternoon, sir," said the barmaid, and I came out into the 'Dilly, where I ran into my friend.

"Excellent idea!" he exclaimed.

"What?" I asked.

"Students of England," he began, "really *should* give more attention to the 'pub.' When you overseas come to London you find the Abbey, you find the Houses of Parliament, you find St. Paul's, and the National Gallery thronged with Americans eager to understand Britain. You would find the public houses thronged with—Englishmen. Mr. Chesterton, somewhere in an

article, says, 'If we really knew what the people are thinking, if we could hear to-day the conversation in a San Francisco saloon and in a Paris café,' and so on. The café has been regarded as a representative institution by all social historians of Paris."

This was before the war. I suppose to-day my friend would say, "Now that the war is over, very probably, one of the most conspicuous evidences of the new order in France will be the altered atmosphere of the café." He continued: "The English inn or tavern, the early public house, is found on every other page of the story of England. The differences between the racial characteristics of the two peoples who speak, approximately, the same language is nowhere more entertainingly presented than in the contrast between the English 'public' and the (late) American bar-room. Every year each of you reads, or writes, several books on England; yet you hear or say little or nothing of 'pubs.' Guide books list all manner of hairdressers, apartments, oyster shops, tea-rooms, baths, music-halls, shops, bazaars, and markets, but star not, nor mention, any 'pubs.' 'Tis a pity. However, come along with me, and I'll take you round the 'pubs' of

England. We'll go in here; this is a cozy crib."

"A hahf a bitter, please, miss. Let me have a look at *Sporting Life,* will you?" He is a tall gentleman, with a flaxen moustache; in a topper, a tail coat, checked trousers, and grey spats. Seats himself on one of the high stools before the little bar. "Lovely day, isn't it?" he says to the barmaid.

It really is a horrible day. "Yes," said my friend, "but that is one of the things you do in England, go about admiring the weather. And, had you been born in England, you would love horses, dogs, and flowers. The 'pubs,' you see, are bowers of flowers. Our gentleman there, of course, wears his buttonhole. See the flowers in jars on the table in the center of the room, flowers in vases on the bar, and on the ledge behind the bar." The barmiss is trimming the stems of flowers. "Flowers," said my friend, "there are instead of the American free lunch, a thing unknown in England. Ice, too, you perceive, is unknown in England. You like your 'Bass' colder? Well, you don't get it here.

"You see, this in which we sit is the 'saloon bar and lounge,' the aristocratic division of the 'pub.' Between those little slanting panes of

glass above the bar you can glimpse the 'public bar' from the common gaze of which we are thus properly screened. Beyond that door is the billiard parlor, a very popular game in England, played on a table with pockets. Aren't the names of these places delightful! In our country we have, or had, 'Smith's Place,' the 'Commercial House,' and the 'Last Chance.' Over here there are the 'Red Lion,' the 'Green Man,' the 'White Hart,' the 'Gun and Magpie,' the 'Yorkshire Grey,' the 'Spotted Dog,' the 'Black Horse,' the 'Elephant and Castle,' the 'Goat and Boots,' the 'Baker and Basket,' the 'Duke of Wellington,' and the 'Six Bells.' Every village has its 'King's Head' and its 'Queen's Head.' About the countryside you find the 'Three Horse Shoes,' the 'Cricketers' Arms,' the 'Jolly Farmers,' the 'Leg of Mutton,' the 'Fox and Hounds,' the 'Plough,' and the 'Dog and Bacon.' Down at Rye, I think it is, there is one of the oldest public houses in England, the 'Cat and Fiddle.' Fancy a 'gin-mill' at home called the 'Holly and Laurel!' Jacobs, in his books, has some 'dandy' names, the 'Flower Pot,' and so on. By the sea the titles of public houses frequently are derived from the names of things familiar to seafaring men. Many

of these names, you know, had their origin in the time when the ability to read was not common among the frequenters of taverns. Six bells on a rod before the door, three wooden swans riding on a bar of wood, or the painting on a board of a male head surmounted by a crown was a sign known of all men. Now there is a 'pub' in London called the 'Goat and Compasses.' Nobody for some considerable while could make any sense out of that. And this is how the name came about. Publicans frequently are persons who have served as butlers, or something like that, in some great house. When they have saved sufficient money they set up for themselves in business; and they like to take the motto of the titled house they served for their sign. Thus, so the story goes, 'God Encompass Us' was the sentiment appropriated by the publican whose sign became so curiously corrupted in the course of time by illiteracy."

"All Spirits Sold in this Establishment," reads a placard on the wall, "Are of the Same Quality as Heretofore, but have been Diluted in Accordance with the Law." All liquor, save malt, is spirits in England.

"A drop of Scotch, please," said one just come in.

"And a splash?" asked the bar miss.

"Excellent temperance idea," remarked my friend, nodding toward the young woman portioning the spirit in a thimble-like measure from which she poured it into the glass. "No bottle over here placed American fashion on the bar before the consumer, from which he, avariciously, recklessly, or absent-mindedly, helps himself to a slug. And its the slugs that tell. While drinking is much more generally indulged in in England than in the States," he continued, "you'll find much less evidence of excess in London than in New York. Probably the climate here has something to do with the matter; some hold that the absence of ice helps; but undoubtedly a man would have to work pretty hard at the game to get beyond the stage of 'bright and merry,' as they say here, on these whiffs of flavoring. Good scheme to introduce into America when the altogether 'dry' rule is found to be impracticable. And, too, in England the 'pubs' obey the law. As you'll see later. Let's trot along.

"We may as well drop in here for a bite," said my friend. "Snacks Sold at this Bar," read the

sign. The snacks consisted of sandwiches, under a glass cover, lobsters, and some sort of salad. A couple of pennies per snack. "I thank you, sir," said the barmaid, very comfortable looking creature, as the senior Weller said of the parlor-maid. "Can I attend you with anything else, sir?" she asked.

"Barmaids, you observe," remarked my friend, "thank you three times for each purchase: when you make your request, when you put down your money, and when they give you your change. Barmaids," he went on, "are nice people. Joseph Pennell, indeed, in some article declares that he could never fall in love with the English barmaid, but then one would hardly imagine Mr. Pennell as a very inflammable person. At home, of course, for a young woman to be associated with a drinking place is a thing not in support of her character. Here no moral stigma attaches to the employment of being a barmaid, any more probably than to that of being a typist. These neat and, as a rule, well behaved misses are infrequently 'handed' any of the rudeness to which their position exposes them, just a bit of respectful chaffing now and then. And their presence gives a touch of domesticity to the 'pub.'" She

who had "attended" us was reading. "Have you a pretty book?" asked the "gove'nor," that is the proprietor, coming in. It was, I observed, "The Marriage of William Ashe," by Mrs. Humphry Ward. In the corner behind the bar the plump, matronly "manageress" was doing some embroidery.

"In the countryside," said my friend, "in the venerable inns of Old England it is pleasant to see in the low-ceilinged tap-room, where the rustics gather, an ancient body, doubtless the 'landlord's' mother, knitting, in chill weather, by the fire in the great fireplace; or, on a fine day, in a sunbonnet, drawing the 'ile.' When her buxom daughter is there, the neighborly yokels ask for, 'A pint, Maggie, and a bit o' cheese.' Did you ever play skittles?" asked my friend. "Nor darts? And at night, by the dim lamplight in the tap-room, after the mug has gone round, did you never sing, 'along of' shepards, bell-ringers, and simple souls of the soil, the most sentimental songs in the world? Well, well!" he sighed, "it is sad the way in which intelligent tourists neglect the 'pub.' The etiquette of the 'pub' of the countryside," he went on, "is a pleasant compliment to unspoiled human nature. When a villager wishes

to treat a number of his friends he does not order several glasses of refreshment, but a copious stone pot, which is passed about like a loving cup. At intervals this vessel rests in a nice niche in the brick of the fireplace. When a newcomer enters the tap—you, say—the kindly, hearty being with whom this pot rests for the moment passes it up to you for a welcoming quaff.

"We'll visit the 'public bar' this time," said my friend as we walked along, "that is the third-class or steerage compartment of the 'pub.' The 'private bar,'" he explained, "is the second-class, generally the 'bottle and jug' department. It is in the 'public bar' that you find the children of the pavement, Cockney lads, coster men and women, hardy working men, the reek and tang of London story."

We entered. And we entered a volume of Phil May. All about, throngs of those racy, becapped characters who wear colored handkerchiefs, knotted before, instead of collars; every one smoking a short, blackened clay pipe; an article supplied gratis by the public house, my friend informed me. "A screw of shag," one asked of the barlasses busily working the beer pumps. Standing in groups and seated on the

plain deal benches behind the unpainted tables round the room, dozens of bloated Sairy Gamps, in men's straw hats; and a rich collection of 'Arriets, each with the celebrated feather of her type aslant over one eye. Going up from all, a lively chatter of the bizarre language of this race. "Alf a quartern of Irish, please," requested one of the mesdames. "All Ladies," ran a sign on the wall, "Unaccompanied by a Gentieman are Requested Not to Remain in this Bar Longer than a Reasonable Time for Refreshment."

"No doubt," said my friend, as we came into the Strand, "you are acquainted with the famous taverns that remain, the much written-up ghosts of the old coffee houses of hoards of historic literary associations. Across the way, you know, is the 'Cock,' not doing business to-day precisely at the old stand known to Pepys, to Thackeray, and to Tennyson, but containing all the internal fittings of the original 'Cock,' a pleasant memorial to the learned dictum: 'No, sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.' And up the next passage, off Fleet Street, that is Wine Office Court, we come to 'a famous tap,' in Hood's phrase: the, or 'Ye

Olde Cheshire Cheese,' the celebrated 'hang-out' of Johnson and Goldsmith, where the Doctor's chair is preserved in a glass case, 'the litterateurs' haunt for three hundred years,' as the 'Book of the Cheese' states, and which is almost as well known to us 'Yanks' as Stratford-on-Avon. I have even heard it rumored that an American company runs the place now. On the visitors' register are the names of Mr. Roosevelt, Joseph Choate, John L. Griffiths, and Ella Wheeler Wilcox. When in this neighborhood it is always as well to drop into the 'Cheese.' Our sentimental countrymen like to harbor the notion that the place is continually filled with the profession of Fleet Street. A number of interesting and more or less distinguished literary clubs do meet upstairs in this 'home of antique ease,' the 'Johnson Club' among them, Mr. Augustine Birrell, president, Chief Secretary for Ireland. Anyhow, its a grand old 'pub,'" said my friend, as we entered the deeply shadowed, tiny bar of olden London town. In the gloaming he pressed the fingers of the sweet barmaid who extended her hand to him in friendly welcome. "There are a couple of Yanks, now," we overheard from be-

hind us. "Yes," was the reply, "this place is much advertised in the States."

"Most of the 'pubs' of the old school," my friend remarked, "are in the City, but we won't have time for them to-day. We should just peep into the much esteemed 'Coal Hole,' modern on a famed old site, on our way back to the West End." We descended into a rather palatial place, where a handsomely gowned young lady came forth from a buffet to receive us, as a hostess might. "You can have highballs here," my friend informed me, "with actual ice. And that reminds me, you should see an 'American bar.' Looks about as much like a bar in America as a goat does like an orangoutang."

So we entered a place where an American flag had been neatly painted on the window. "Good advertising dodge, here in the neighborhood of the Haymarket," my friend commented. Within were all the familiar features of a 'pub' of its social class: the soda-fountain-like bar, the immaculate damsels behind it polishing glasses, the flowers about, the huge glass reservoirs on the bar, which contain spirits and look like the signs we used to have in drug store windows, and, before the bar, tall stools and a row of London

"nuts." On the wall a card: "American Drinks."

"Well," said my friend, "suppose we take a 'bus and saunter over Chelsea way, where we'll dine at the house. I suppose you have noticed well-appearing women drinking in several of the places we have visited, sometimes accompanied by young men, sometimes merely with each other. While they would hardly have been persons of fashion or titled ladies, the practice is perfectly all right here, quite different to what it is with us. Curious thing," he ambled on, "about lager beer. If you merely call for beer here, as you do, or did, on Broadway, you get the poorest stuff in England, one pence ha' penny the glass, three cents. The great drink in England, after tea perhaps, is ale of one sort or another. Choosing what you want is a rather complicated matter if you are not familiar with the many different varieties. Ordinary ale, bitter for instance, is thri'-pence a glass. Now if you want real beer you ask for lager beer, which is never on draught. With us lager beer was the drink of the common people, but over here it is a rather aristocratic drink and comparatively expensive.

"Hello! Here we are. We might look in at

the 'Nine Pins'; at the back, you see, is the bowling green."

Later, in the long London twilight, we walked along the Chelsea embankment.

"In these gardens," said my friend, "Thomas Carlyle used to smoke his pipe of an evening, and I have an idea that sometimes he went into this 'pub' right here on Cheyne Walk, at the bottom of the Row. Chelsea," he continued, "with its many fine houses, one-time called the Village of Palaces, now a pleasant residential borough, is also, as you know, the Latin Quarter of London. And here at the 'Crown' in the evening gathers a friendly neighborhood company of prepossessing middle-class folks together with a sprinkling of amusing 'Bohemian' society, long-haired artists and the like. That is in the 'saloon.' The public bar in front provides for the comfort of a number of not overworked cabmen from the 'rack' there across the way."

"Dear old Charles Lever, I knew him well," a nice, elderly person is saying in the club-like "lounge" of the "Crown." My friend chats with the pigeon-like barmiss, whom he addresses as "Suckey." A neat, bright, plump person in gold-rimmed spectacles, behind the little flower-

bedecked bar, tells me (perceiving that I am a stranger) that the "governor," her husband, is very "keen" on museums, particularly on collections of Blue John china, and that I should have him take me around some day. A group of unexpectionable appearing young women, seated on one of the upholstered seats at a little table, are sipping their refreshment slowly. Long-stemmed flowers lay across the crook of their elbows. Quite a domestic, home-like atmosphere altogether. And so the evening goes.

"Ah!" exclaimed my friend, "a quarter to twelve. A few minutes till closing hour. Shortly you will witness what will very probably strike you, as a New Yorker, as a remarkable thing: complete respect for the law. The 'pubs' are open to-morrow, on Sunday, from one to three, and from six till, I believe, eleven. When they close they do close; not a 'back door' nor a 'family entrance' in all London.

"Time! gentlemen!" cried the governor, coming out into the room. "Time! gentlemen! Time! please, gentlemen! Time!"

IX

EMIGRATING BACK HOME

"THERE'S another thing, too," we heard a man say on our way back—a very "smart" man, too,—"when this war is over the steerage is going to be put out of business, or at least greatly altered. Too many people of some consequence in this country" (he continued) "have now got a line on what that thing is. And when there is room in anybody's head for thoughts of something beside the great drama of this struggle, and particularly when many over here begin to think of another trip 'across,' the Society of American Refugees will very probably get busy with a little reconstruction work on the Davy Jones' locker of the ocean liner" (he said).

Well, at any rate,—by way of a little discussion of the subject, and of amiable reminiscence of a bit of United States' history, now largely forgotten—it wasn't so long ago that there was again a Ship upon the ocean. When we thought

that romance had departed from the high seas we had another guess coming.

A Ship, that is, come out of the clash of armies, manned by a piratical crew, freighted with a cargo of beings as strange and motley as any that ever came out of yarn or story; millionaires and the destitute, refined ladies and red Indians, long rats, gentlemen, Chinamen, Russian Jews, American school teachers, student misses, and "coons" that grew in the U. S. A., all in a bunch cheek by jowl. This was the Refugee Ship back to "the States" at the outbreak of the great war.

Haughty, unfortunate, affluent persons who "came across" second class this trip in the autumn before the War missed the splendor of the world, missed the salt savor of the mighty deep, missed the touch of nature that makes all mankind kin, missed a tale better than those held in books, and a liberal education.

In September, 1914, the American Committee sitting in London urged us all to clear out as soon as possible and to get back 'ome. Most of the 'buses to cross the Atlantic were "full up," as they say in England. But in the steamship *Kansas City,* flying the Stars and Stripes, to sail from Liverpool within a couple of days, room in

the steerage was "available." We, this here writer, closed with the deal, and for the sum of six pounds ten became an immigrant, so our ticket said, entitled—according to the same document—to so many ounces of meat a day, so much water, bread and jam. We were promised transportation, and, in addition, everything essential to maintain life until we should be landed. We had been led to believe, by the newspapers and so on, that some of the rules and regulations pertaining to steerage passengers would not be held to rigidly in the circumstances of our voyage. And we had got the notion that, as a refugee of war, we would find things aboard fairly all right. Humorous idea, that.

We took the midnight train from St. Pancras to avoid hotel bill at Liverpool. London, our dear mistress these many months past, now warm, now cold, untwined her arms; and we rode away to (we hoped) return and love another day. On our journey we beguiled the time in a pleasant, bumly-lit, and exceedingly uncomfortable third-class carriage compartment with discussing the war, American money, and so on, with two very amiable "Chinks" and an uninformed person

whose unfamiliar nationality we were never able to fix upon, all bound for the same craft.

If, as *Who's Who* swears, Mr. Le Gallienne engaged in business for seven years in Liverpool he deserves more credit than many folks give him. However—comma—that is merely by the by. In Liverpool we were directed to an unfashionable alley, where we found a great number of the rest of us, so to put it, and where the lot of us stood in line for several hours, more falling into queue all the while. Occasionally, one of our number at head of column would get through a little door into a dingy office, where he discovered he had his ticket checked up and was "inspected and passed," as the numbered card given him declared, by the U. S. Consulate at Liverpool. This happy achievement accomplished, we each beat it for the boat. We were, we had been told, to embark by tender at Prince's Landing Stage at eleven-thirty.

On the dock was assembled a vast array of persons all intent upon the same ambition of sailing on the *Kansas City*. As the hours sped by with leaden feet this company swelled to magnificent proportions. We learned later that the passengers of two other ships which the British govern-

ment had suddenly taken over for the transportation of troops had been transferred to the *Kansas City*. Numerous inhabitants of Liverpool came out to witness the spectacle of a section of the population of the United States returning home. A cheerful, patient lot we all were, and every once in a while, it could be observed, some one of us up front was rewarded by getting over the gangway and aboard the tender. When, in the fullness of time, we personally arrived at this bridge of joy, the gangway, a gentleman stationed there, got up in a uniform, snatched our passport from us and demanded to see our eyes. "Take off your glasses," he commanded.

Well, in the course of the afternoon we all arrived aboard the ship. Here the first job for the horde of us was to stand round again in close formation for a while awaiting to be assigned to our "berths." The earliest insight into the capability of the ship's management was given in this business. Upon going below the writer of this piece discovered that three other men had been designated to occupy his bunk, a place of repose about as wide as three planks. When appealed to, the chief steward cussed us out for this, and the three other gentlemen eventually disap-

peared, we know not whither. One of them, however, who went somewhere forward, returned to us later and complained that the Indians and negroes by whom he was surrounded at rest "stunk", so that he could not stay there. He said that sleeping in his clothes on the park bench which ran round the deck was not refreshing, so we loaned him our bed for naps in the daytime.

The ship had got away. We whiled away the remainder of the afternoon standing altogether, packed into a densely shaded part of the ship aft, waiting to be admitted to our supper. Just before us was as nice a woman as ever you saw in your life, with two very handsome young daughters. Her home was in Wisconsin, she told us, and she had been travelling extensively on the continent, and, too, in the Far East. The meals on the good ship *Kansas City,* in the steerage, we found were interesting and peculiar, and absolutely no "dog" was put on in serving them. We stirred our tea with our fork, no spoon being handy, and we dipped sugar from a pan with our knife. Tea was the best dish they had; and we came to live upon that mainly, and tobacco. The rest of the things tasted too much like medicine. Curious, how they got that taste even into the

inside of an egg-shell. The soup may have been excellent, but to see one of the stewards carrying a bucket of it along the deck when the ship listed a bit and slopped some of it over the side of the bucket, where it looked most realistically like garbage, somewhat prejudiced us against it. Then, too, it was difficult to take a plate of it, handed by a steward over the head of a fellow passenger across the table, the plate being so slippery. Everything used at the table, you know, was quite slippery. Also cups frequently contained the tea grounds of some one who had used the cups before you. The tea, fortunately, was served in copious measures, not unlike a galvanized iron watering pot somewhat flattened at the sides, when full rather heavy to lift and pass along. On our way back to the deck for a breath of air, after we had escaped from our supper, we were given our "table ticket," printed in four languages, which admitted us to the "third sitting" at the table.

The *Kansas City* was built some twenty years ago, and its steerage is a genuine old-fashioned steerage, without any fake about it. The deck, an aisle about three feet wide along both sides of the ship, was too crowded during our voyage to

permit of one's walking about in comfort. When you sat down on the park bench against the cabin you could not see the sea because of a high fence, whatever they call it, at the deck's edge. Above, a roof supported numerous pipes which continually dripped a very respectable amount of water upon the herd of us throughout the trip. And that reminds us of something. A well-disposed lady among the second-class passengers suggested to the captain of the ship that their saloon be thrown open to the less lucky ones travelling third class that they might have some place to go to entertain themselves. The captain replied to the lady, we learned, that if she knew the "kind of cattle" that was down there she would not ask that. He was a harsh man, the captain, and he would have no monkey-business on his ship. There were placards stuck round in the dining-room and in the sleeping quarters absolutely prohibiting smoking on those decks. But when we saw members of the crew and numerous stewards going about in those places continually puffing on cigarettes we were reassured and did likewise. It is a rather remarkable thing, altogether, that that ship ever came to port. It was such a jolly place, where everybody just did as he bloomin' pleased.

The crew, you see, were not supposed to drink. But this was a true old-time seafaring crew, and they had an ingenious way of managing that matter. When the ringleader of a group of fine, rough, and thirsty seamen put sixpence into our hand and asked us to purchase three beers while they waited for it round the corner, the barman did not ask us where our three friends were. Then there was a pleasant and agreeable disregard of another sign posted in conspicuous places which said that any member of the ship's company who offered anything for sale to the passengers was liable to imprisonment at hard labor. This regulation, however, inconvenienced nobody. Stewards had quite a habit of saying to you, "I know where there is a good orange tree. Three for sixpence." Though they sometimes added that the oranges would "not be ripe" until the afternoon. And they had another very friendly remark, too: "You look after me and I'll look after you." Stewards of the steerage, poor souls, don't often have a harvest time when they have under their protection cattle with odd sixpences in their pockets. As venders of delicacies these stewards were kindness itself, and a great comfort to all

moneyed passengers. We were advised that for ten shillings, payable to a young man in a white linen coat, we could sit at a special table and partake of extraordinary fare. This came to be known as the "Jew table," and was arranged, ostensibly, for the benefit of those of our cabin whose religion prevented their eating the regular daily menu. We did not, however, discover any appreciable improvement in it. Russian Jews, by the way, are nice people. An uncommonly unattractive specimen gave us half of his orange one day after we had gone plumb broke.

The deck got very damp at night. Some of our company, nevertheless, managed to sleep there on the bench, as a place preferable to the bunk-rooms below, rolled up in their bed-clothes, which was one decidedly musty smelling blanket supplied to each one. Love making went on in a manner even more touching than it does in first and second cabins, so that a stroll about the deck at midnight suggested certain nocturnal aspects of Central Park. And all of us made a practice of staying up just as long as we possibly could, so that we would not mind anything when we went to bed. Our friend, the chief Indian, who wore his full head of feathers all the while, was

good society day and night, though his mind was not active. His show had "busted up" somewhere in Europe; his paternal government was sending him back to the land of his birth; and his chief concern was the question of the distance from where the boat docked to Coney Island. Another companion of ours was a colored "comedian," as he described himself; a dapper gentleman who had been profitably engaged in exhibiting the humorous character of the American Negro to Europe for the past seven years or so. He was a treasure mine of matches to us after we had used up and given all of ours away. The refugee steerage is the great leveller of the artificial division of classes. There the first is last and the last is first. It was pleasant to see well dressed and intelligent-appearing men "bumming" cigarettes from shambling niggers who happened to have a couple of shillings left. An Italian soul whose knowledge of English was limited gave us the drum-stick of a fried chicken which she had in a cardboard box. The second day out we had supper with the Master at Arms, whatever he is, in his cabin, where, it seemed to us, there were thousands of delicious roast ducks on the table. Anyhow that was our only meal on the ship.

EMIGRATING BACK HOME

You know what the stack room of a public library looks like. The sleeping quarters in the steerage of the *Kansas City* look very like that. The crowd of us slept, row after row, in tiers supported by iron frames. We personally had a rather palatial place, as it was really a room, with a partition round it, containing four bunks. There was considerable complaint, from our company, of rats down in the hold. Several were killed about the bunks. But we think the complaints largely came from nervous people, like ladies. We saw only two ourselves. After a view of the wash room, we decided not to wash much, though we were supplied with a towel for the voyage. And shaving was so difficult in the circumstances that few of us shaved regularly. So, altogether, it was a rather pretty lot of humanity one viewed about those premises. A few days out the ship ran into a bit of rough weather. Many people became very sick. When one was sick in his bed it was a trifle unpleasant for his neighbors, as those parts of the ship were infrequently cleaned. On deck things were better in this matter. Where the deck met the gunwale ran an iron trough. This was washed out every day, by the simple process of placing a hose in

one end of the trough and turning on the water.

"Did you hear about it?" said a bright lad aboard. "Each of us is to be given a rat, out of our own bunk, as a souvenir of the voyage."

"We'll be doing well," replied another, "if we get no more than a rat."

Right he was! We got conjunctivitis ourself, and were long doctoring our eye. As we came up on deck we noticed the very nice lady with her daughters laughing gaily with our friend the chief Indian. Remarkable how everybody kept their good nature during that voyage, everybody, that is, except the officers. On going down late to supper one night we received a violent calling down from the chief steward, or some such person. Many of our family were pained at the way those in charge talked to them. These officers seemed to have an idea that the passengers of the third cabin were a gang of laborers they were in charge of. Though it might fairly be argued that these passengers were employing the officers.

There were several interesting informal fights on deck and in the dining room, engaged in by argumentative persons of various nationalities who inhabited the vicinity of the bar. Then late

one night a very nice, though somewhat bloody, boxing match was arranged in the dining room, which caused a complete secession there for the time being of poker. A baby was born on board, too, whose enthusiastic mother named it Kansas City, in honor of the ship. A birth on shipboard is a good omen, and the collection amounted to forty dollars. One day we were advised to line up again in the dining room to be vaccinated by the ship's doctor. Those of our number who could show a good scar were passed without this medical attention. But three more forced marches confronted our friends and us. The last evening before the ship docked we and our associates put in filing through the dining room to have our criminal records investigated by the purser, so to put it; to exhibit our passports and so forth; and American citizens were told that they would be liberated on the morrow. Why all these many examinations could not have been performed at one fell pop gets our goat.

The last day aboard! Officers of the ship advised all of us to look carefully after our belongings throughout the day, to leave nothing easily transportable in the bunk rooms, and to make sure that we had our bags locked. For, we

were given to understand, this was the day when members of the ship's company "went through" the passengers. Bags, we heard, were liable to be emptied of their contents by piratical members of the crew or stewards, and the bags themselves thrown into the sea. It was a hot, fair day, but those of us who had such possessions walked about from morn till night with three umbrellas in their clutch and overcoats over their arms. An arrangement was put into operation, too, whereby different ones of us took turns at watch over the luggage below. A portion of the regular staff of this ship, you see, had probably been called to military service, and their places filled by wastrels picked up along the shore.

At length, the point of Manhattan, with its cluster of towers, came into sight, looking, as Mr. James remarks, like a huge pin cushion. Home! Barbers' shops and baths! Linen, clean linen to sleep in! Snowy tables laid with sparkling silver! Food! do you get us? food for the gods—of the Refugee Ship! Opposite Ellis Island the United States quarantine boat, flying the yellow flag, came alongside. It contained a youthful doctor, who mounted to our deck, where, with hats removed, the travellers in the steerage were

driven past him to have their faces looked at as evidence of their desirability as citizens of the United States. "Yes, that is Brooklyn."

The refugees aboard the *Kansas City* assembled together again for the last time, in the ship's ball room, to be passed upon again for something or other. Then, there was much shaking of hands.

"Here's hoping we three never meet again," said one—"on board the *Kansas City.*"

"How I love the sea," said another, "and all it stands for."

"What does it stand for?" a lady inquired.

"Well, it stands for the *Kansas City,*" he returned; "and I wouldn't do that again."

There was one more trick and then we were through, except for the customs. Our card, bearing a large red number, read, in eight languages: "When landing in New York this card to be pinned to the coat or dress of the passenger in a prominent position." "Where's your card? Where's your card?" a man in uniform blocking the way yelled at us as we struggled along with our luggage. He tore the card from its pin on our coat, then handed it back to us. But there were good lads among that crew. "Here's hop-

ing we are shipmates again," called to us a seaman who had one day given us free some second class sandwiches. "Don't you want to see me before you leave?" our table steward asked. When we had explained to him our embarrassing position: "That's all right. If you haven't got it, you can't give it, can you?"

Among our many friends was a gentleman, in a large black slouch hat, from the Middle West. He had travelled in every country in Europe. This or that would remind him of something, say, in Denmark. "Gosh," we heard him say as he disembarked, "I hope I'll be home in time for the State Fair."

MAJOR AMBERSON had 'made a fortune' in 1873, when other people were losing fortunes, and the magnificence of the Ambersons began then." Well, there is something magnificent about that sentence, as the opening line of "The Magnificent Ambersons." It has a sweep and a roll. It presents perfectly what Fielding called the "Bill of Fare to the Feast." The author has set down to a large canvas. The line is reminiscent of that great, rich opening sentence which begins, "When the present century was in its 'teens——". Indeed, it is decidedly Thackerayan. It has a worldly air. This, ladies and gentlemen, is a story—of love? Quite probably. Of adventure? It may be. But, first, this is a story of the foundation of things generally—that is, of money. Major Amberson made a fortune. And this circumstance is, naturally, the basis, the real beginning, of a curious pattern, a

moving play, of romance and tragedy. It is the heart of the drama.

Of what does the world most talk? What most interests a man of sense throughout all his days? What, in the last analysis, did win the war? What is it that the philosopher, old Omar, would take, and let the credit go? Of what is the laborer worthy? What is the name of the Island to which Long John Silver and young Jim Hawkins (and every other adventurer) sailed? What is it that Dr. Johnson said everybody but a blockhead wrote for? What is it, as Samuel Butler tells us, that a man most fears to lose, beyond even his reputation and his health? A study should be made of the part played by money in the pages of fiction, and—beginning with, say, Shakespeare—the drama. Certainly it will be found that every serious criticism of life takes much account of money. And I think it will be revealed that those creative works which are most substantial as art are the ones most preoccupied with this theme.

At any rate, Mr. Tarkington, in "The Magnificent Ambersons," had squared his elbows as never yet before. For some time, it has been apparent to those who have taken the trouble critically to

observe him, a desire has been growing upon him to write a book. I myself have an idea that he will write one, before he gets through; and (if the gods who have so greatly indulged him without, however, spoiling him for this purpose, do not consider it funny to head him off now) perhaps two or three. The earnestness of his artistic ambition is attested by his present theme. "Keep your eye," he has (I imagine) said to himself in conceiving this novel—"keep your eye sternly on this spring of human destiny, money, and you will not, as so often before, be led astray into the swashbuckle, the melodramatic, the claptrap, the sentimental, and all the rest of it. There's the theme; be worthy of it! There's the germ of a novel builded upon a rock, and not (like most of my others) on the sand. Never for an instant lose track of the idea of money, as practical men regard this idea, and you will see life steadily and see it whole. You'll pull something worth while out of this." So, as I say, I imagine him as saying.

"The Ambersons were magnificent in their day and place. Their splendor lasted throughout all the years that saw their Midland town spread and darken into a city; but reached its topmost dur-

ing the period when every prosperous family with children kept a Newfoundland dog." There are several aspects of this fictional history of a "Midland town" family in which it is extraordinary. Doubtless the most striking thing about it is the extraordinary leap it presents in Mr. Tarkington's ambition.

The novel which undertakes to be a fairly adequate history of several generations of some hypothetical family has been of recent years somewhat the vogue. Butler's "The Way of All Flesh," McFee's "Casuals of the Sea," and more recently "Secret Bread," by F. Tennyson Jesse, are perhaps the examples that most readily come to mind. Mr. Tarkington, of course, indicated long ago, in his first novel, an inclination in the very best vein for the transcript of life kind of thing; but in the middle of "The Gentleman from Indiana" he got tired of the realistic impulse and switched to something else. Then throughout the long list of his gaily colored stories he has at intervals cast upon the scene the eye of the faithful observer of mankind. And he has, indeed, of late drawn some stunningly realistic figures, Cora Madison and Penrod most memorable, doubtless, among them. But "The Flirt" is but a sketch, a

glimpse, however penetrating, of a figure seen in passing. And Penrod, complete as he is as a living organism, represents but one of the seven ages of man. "The Turmoil" is a fairly rounded portrait of a family, and admirable, more than admirable, as an impressionistic study of a city. Here, for the first time in his career in a work of any length, the intermittently romantic author maintained a consistent point of view, that of a critic of society. But "The Turmoil" is the story of little more than the crisis (with its necessary setting) in the life of a family; that family, symbolic as it may be taken to be of a phase of the city's development, merely an episode in the *history* of the city.

These memoirs of a "magnificent" family span three generations. They open on a "thrifty" day —the money *motif* firmly established in all its bearings at the start. The people of this Midland town "were thrifty because they were the sons or grandsons of the 'early settlers' who had opened the wilderness and had reached it from the East and the South with wagons and axes and guns, but with no money at all. The pioneers were thrifty or they would have perished: they had to store away food for the winter, or goods to

trade for food, and they often feared they had not stored enough—they left traces of that fear in their sons and grandsons. In the minds of most of these, indeed, their thrift was next to their religion: to save, even for the sake of saving, was their earliest lesson and discipline. No matter how prosperous they were, they could not spend money either upon 'art', or upon mere luxury and entertainment, without a sense of sin.

"Against so homespun a background the magnificence of the Ambersons was as conspicuous as a brass band at a funeral. Major Amberson bought two hundred acres of land at the end of National Avenue; and through this tract he built broad streets and cross-streets; paved them with cedar block, and curbed them with stone. He set up fountains, here and there, where the streets intersected, and at symmetrical intervals placed cast-iron statues, painted white, with their titles clear upon the pedestals: Minerva, Mercury, Hercules, Venus, Gladiator, Emperor Augustus, Fisher Boy, Staghound, Mastiff, Greyhound, Fawn, Antelope, Wounded Doe and Wounded Lion. Most of the forest trees had been left to flourish still, and, at some distance, or by moonlight, the place was in truth beautiful; but the

ardent citizen, loving to see his city grow, wanted neither distance nor moonlight. He had not seen Versailles, but, standing before the Fountain of Neptune in Amberson Addition, at bright noon, and quoting the favorite comparison of the local newspapers, he declared Versailles outdone. All this Art showed a profit from the start, for the lots sold well and there was something like a rush to build in the new Addition. Its main thoroughfare, an oblique continuation of National Avenue, was called Amberson Boulevard, and here, at the juncture of the new Boulevard and the Avenue, Major Amberson reserved four acres for himself, and built his new house—the Amberson Mansion, of course."

It may or it may not be a point having more than local interest; but there is in the Midland city of Indianapolis (and has been within my memory) an "Addition" identical with this of Major Amberson's. It is called Woodruff Place. Indeed, it seems to me that there is critical point in the fact that so much of "The Magnificent Ambersons" is a quite literal transcript of the setting that, to a mind familiar with the locality, the book, for considerable stretches, does not seem a fiction, a creative work, at all; but reads rather

like an engagingly written history of the city, from 1873 to 1916. In numerous instances, as in the case of Bucktown, the negro quarter, the author has not even cared to follow the usual practice of rechristening the place, by even some slight variation in syllables of its name. The point is, it may be, Mr. Tarkington's determination henceforth to build solidly, to anchor against the flight of airy fancy, to write the Dreadnaught kind o' thing.

The new Amberson Mansion was the pride of the town. Sixty thousand dollars for the woodwork *alone!* Yes, sir! And *all* that kind of thing. All visitors were patriotically taken for "a little drive around the city," even if the host had to hire a hack. Climax of the display—the Amberson Mansion. *Bought* their dog, the Ambersons did. Called it a Saint Bernard. Old Aleck Minafer—about the closest old codger about—wanted to know if anybody ever heard of anybody buyin' a dog before. Said he saw some sense in payin' a nigger a dime, or even a quarter, to *drown* a dog for you, but——. And yet, as one citizen put it, when you saw that dog out walking with Miss Isabel Amberson, he seemed worth the money. Miss Isabel was perhaps

eighteen, and apparently somewhat difficult to describe. But, to quote again the same authority, she was just a "kind of a *delightful* lookin' young lady"!

Among the ineligible young men of the town (they were all ineligible) was a sparkling gentleman who "led germans" with Miss Isabel, and sent sonnets to her with his bouquets—"sonnets lacking neither music nor wit." Generous, poor, well-dressed, none doubted that he would be able to persuade Isabel, "but he unfortunately joined too merry a party one night, and, during a moonlight serenade upon the lawn before the Amberson Mansion, was easily identified from the windows as the person who stepped through the bass viol and had to be assisted to a waiting carriage."

"She took the persistent one, Wilbur Minafer, no breaker of bass viols or of hearts, no serenader at all."

Wilbur *Minafer!* It was the queerest thing any woman ever heard of!

The wedding was of Ambersonian magnificence. Raw oysters floating in scooped-out blocks of ice and a band from out of town—champagne, showy presents; and the Major's colossal present a set of architect's designs for a

house almost as elaborate and impressive as the Mansion, the house to be built in Amberson Addition by the Major.

"At the age of nine, George Amberson Minafer, the Major's one grandchild, was a princely terror, dreaded not only in Amberson Addition but in many other quarters through which he galloped on his white pony. 'By golly, I guess you think you own this town!' an embittered laborer complained, one day, as George rode the pony straight through a pile of sand the man was sieving. 'I will when I grow up,' the undisturbed child replied. 'I guess my grandpa owns it now, you bet!' And the baffled workman, having no means to controvert what seemed a mere exaggeration of the facts, could only mutter 'Oh, pull down your vest!'

" 'Don't haf to! Doctor says it ain't healthy!' the boy returned promptly. 'But I tell you what I'll do: I'll pull down my vest if you'll wipe off your chin!'

"This was stock and stencil: the accustomed argot of street badinage of the period; and in such matters Georgie was an expert. He had no vest to pull down; the incongruous fact was that a fringed sash girdled the juncture of his velvet

blouse and breeches, for the Fauntleroy period had set in, and Georgie's mother had so poor an eye for appropriate things, where Georgie was concerned, that she dressed him according to the doctrine of that school in boy decoration. Not only did he wear a silk sash, and silk stockings, and a broad lace collar, with his little black velvet suit: he had long brown curls, and often came home with burrs in them."

And so Georgie grew. He became a public character, a town topic.

"Many people glanced at him with great distaste when they chanced to encounter him, which meant nothing to Georgie, because he innocently believed most grown people to be necessarily cross-looking as a normal phenomenon resulting from the adult state; and he failed to comprehend that the distasteful glances had any personal bearing upon himself. If he had perceived such a bearing, he would have been affected only so far, probably, as to mutter, 'Riffraff!' Possibly he would have shouted it; and, certainly, most people believed a story that went round the town just after Mrs. Amberson's funeral, when Georgie was eleven. Georgie was reported to have differed with the undertaker about the seating of

the family; his indignant voice had become audible: 'Well, who *is* the most important person, at my own grandmother's funeral?' And later he had projected his head from the window of the foremost mourners' carriage, as the undertaker happened to pass.

"'*Riffraff!*'

"There were people—grown people they were—who expressed themselves longingly: they *did* hope to live to see the day, they said, when that boy would get his 'come-upance'! They used that honest word, so much better than 'deserts,' and not until many years later to be more clumsily rendered as 'what is coming to him.' *Something* was bound to take him down, some day, and they only wanted to *be* there! But Georgie heard nothing of this, and the yearners for his taking down went unsatisfied, while their yearning grew the greater as the happy day of fulfilment was longer and longer postponed."

His grandeur was not diminished; the rather it increased. First, tutors at home, then private school in the town. The stuffing, it was prophesied, was to be knocked out of him at "Prep School." But no. He was deported by the authorities, to come back home the cock of the

walk, and Penrod it round the old town. In his William Sylvanus Baxter period he became a youth, grand, gloomy and peculiar, mingling something of the Byronic and something of the Hamletic. And it was then that his "come-up-ance," momentous beyond the dreams of enmity, began to hover in the offing.

Extraordinary among Mr. Tarkington's books for its length of years, "The Magnificent Ambersons" is extraordinary in American literature as a reference album. It bridges a gulf in memory between an obsolete world and to-day. Even "Dad," of "Sweet Cap" fame, has nothing whatever on Mr. Tarkington's amazing store of venerable memories. What was the fashion in trousers in the early eighties? In beards? In hats? In shoes, cravats, hair-cuts, coat-tails, household furniture, dances, sports, theatrical entertainments, dogs, literature, weddings, in (what we call to-day) interior decoration, in architecture, servants, songs and slang? Dear, dear! how the long-dead past awakens to hear again: "You'll Remember Me," "I Dreamt That I Dwelt in Marble Halls," "Silver Threads Among the Gold," "Kathleen Mavourneen," "The Soldier's Farewell," "Olivette," "The Mascot," "The

Chimes of Normandy," "Giroflé-Girofla," "Fra Diavolo," and "Pinafore" and "The Pirates of Penzance" and "Patience." And as for argot, if the world should lose all interest in novels it would not willingly let die this remarkable sort of American Henley and Farmer's Dictionary of Slang, 1873-1916.

The rise, the flowering and the decay of a whole epoch in American civilization is mirrored in this chronicle of the splendor of the Ambersons which lasted "throughout all the years that saw their Midland town spread and darken into a city." And a most richly interesting, an epochal, epoch (so to say) it is.

"After sunrise, on pleasant mornings, the alleys behind the stables were gay; laughter and shouting went up and down their dusty lengths, with a lively accompaniment of currycombs knocking against back fences and stable walls, for the darkies loved to curry their horses in the alley. Darkies always prefer to gossip in shouts instead of whispers; and they feel that profanity, unless it be vociferous, is almost worthless.

". . . They have passed, those darky hiredmen of the Midland town; and the introspective horses they curried and brushed and whacked and

amiably cursed—those good old horses switch their tails at flies no more. For all their seeming permanence they might as well have been buffaloes—or the buffalo laprobes that grew bald in patches and used to slide from the careless drivers' knees and hang unconcerned, half way to the ground. The stables have been transformed into other likenesses, or swept away, like the woodsheds where were kept the stovewood and kindling that the 'girl' and the 'hired-man' always quarrelled over: who should fetch it. Horse and stable and woodshed, and the whole tribe of the 'hired-man,' all are gone. They went quickly, yet so silently that we whom they served have not yet really noticed that they are vanished."

So with other vanishings. There was the leisurely little bob-tailed street-car drawn by a lone mule. If there has been a failure to preserve a specimen car of this period in any museum, that's all right now; as one can easily be remodelled from a page or so of "The Magnificent Ambersons." There was Georgie's mark of a patrician child of the time—a pony. And "surreys" and "cutters" for the later day when his heart was moved to ride not alone. Then, well, the "plot" of "The Magnificent Ambersons" is largely an

effective presentation of the romance of American locomotion. There came a man to that town who rigged up an outlandish affair which he called an automobile, a term which he preferred to the nickname at first given it, "horseless carriage." Despised of Georgie, the new fad in such vehicles rapidly spread, exceedingly exceeding even the bicycle craze—and with it came the new day and the passing of the old order. "The Magnificent Ambersons" witnesses the advent of the chauffeur, a strange figure in leather at the wheel, "goggled out of all personality and seemingly part of the mechanism"—symbol of a new civilization.

It is, perhaps, a coincidence that the father of this engine which both directly and indirectly operated to overthrow the splendor of the Ambersons, was none other than that onetime gay young serenader who had the ill luck to step through a bass viol in plain moonlight view of an adored window: Eugene Morgan, rejected suitor of Isabel Amberson. And it is perhaps a further coincidence—though such coincidences happen in the best regulated of novels—that he was the father also of Lucy, that "little beauty," as people speaking casually were apt to define her; that

"independent, masterful, self-reliant little American" who, though slave to no lamp save that of her own conscience, had a weakness:

"She had fallen in love with George Amberson Minafer at first sight, and no matter how she disciplined herself, she had never been able to climb out. The thing had happened to her; that was all. George had looked just the way she had always wanted someone to look—the riskiest of all the moonshine ambushes wherein tricky romance snares credulous young love. But what was fatal to Lucy was that this thing having happened to her, she could not change it. No matter what she discovered in George's nature she was unable to take away what she had given him; and though she could think differently about him, she could not feel differently about him, for she was one of those too faithful victims of glamour. When she managed to keep the picture of George away from her mind's eye, she did well enough; but when she let him become visible, she could not choose but love what she disdained. She was a little angel who had fallen in love with high-handed Lucifer; quite an experience, and not apt to be soon succeeded by any falling in love with a tamer party—and the unhappy truth was that

George did make better men seem tame. But though she was a victim, she was a heroic one, anything but helpless."

"The Magnificent Ambersons" is extraordinary among Mr. Tarkington's books for its mood. It is not, surprisingly enough, a particularly witty book. Throughout the years this Midland town spread and *darkened* into a city. "As it heaved and spread it befouled itself and darkened its sky." The "old stock" of its citizenry became displaced by a "new Midlander," a hybrid American. A new idealism arose, the core of which was this: "The more prosperous my beloved city the more prosperous beloved I!" And so on and so forth. Mr. Tarkington's temperamental distaste for pleasant (home) towns developing into flourishing cities was made unmistakably clear in "The Turmoil," where the matter was resented with a pounding energy of ferocious satire. The astonishing thing here is that the inevitable evolution of manners is accepted with a kind of humorous, ironic melancholy.

It is Eugene Morgan, automobile manufacturer, who builds, far out in the new millionaire's section, what is in effect the new Amberson Man-

sion. And a broken and gray-haired grandfather, of whom it was one time said in that town "as rich as Major Amberson," prepares to enter "the unknown country where he was not even sure of being recognized as an Amberson."

Mr. Tarkington's present sobered pondering of life's strange ways frequently finds expression in direct reflection. "The Magnificent Ambersons" presents, running through it like an orchestral thrumming to the play, a sort of Meredithian Pilgrim's Scrip. And these epigrammatic observations are often exceedingly good. Lucy had occasion to remove George's picture from her mantelpiece, where the spot it had sheltered from the dust was revealed a lighter tone than the surrounding woodwork. "She did not have the mantelpiece repainted—and, since she did not, might as well have kept his photograph. One forgets what made the scar upon his hand but not what made the scar upon his wall."

It is a singular, at least it is an interesting, perhaps a "significant" thing, that at about the time, presumably, that Mr. Tarkington was writing "The Magnificent Ambersons" another American novelist of established reputation was at work on a fictional history of another Midland

family of the old order of "quality," with its pained spiritual shudder at the increasing proximity of the coarser grain; a history of the crumbling of its highly self-conscious social bulwarks, and its difficulties in adjusting itself to the new measure of money. What to the Ambersons was "riffraff" the Boardmans called just "common." "The Boardman Family" sought to be equally veracious with "The Magnificent Ambersons" as a mirror of passing manners; and Mrs. Mary S. Watts, equally with the author of "The Magnificent Ambersons," felt that the occasion called for the guiding inspiration of the same great master. A piquant circumstance, too, this last, in view of the fact that the works of Thackeray are being retired from the shelves of public libraries as books no longer in popular demand.

Mr. Tarkington has one time said (in conversation) that in writing each of his books he has had in the back of his head, as a kind of a flywheel to his creative engine, the thought of some one classic fiction. If the rumble and lash of "The Turmoil" points (as I think) thus to "Vanity Fair," the scaffolding of "The Magnificent Ambersons," it seems clear enough, is that of "The Newcomes," that epic of the sinking of an-

other aristocratic fortune. Whether it is frankly done, or slyly, or naïvely, the author of "The Magnificent Ambersons" even writes down, by repeated allusion, his tribute to the spirit of the noble Victorian at his elbow. The name of the Amberson family horse is "Pendennis."

The outstanding difference between "The Boardman Family" and "The Magnificent Ambersons" is that the first is, for all its realistic intention, in its "story" just about as romantic as "Little Red Riding Hood" or "Cinderella." Perhaps the prime distinction of "The Magnificent Ambersons" is that it eschews the artificial form of the popular "story" as scrupulously as Mr. James. It is, at least, exactly what it sets out to be.

There is no "villain" in the piece; Mr. Tarkington has at last got rid of that histrionic convention which so long held him in thrall. There are no "hidden papers;" there is no secret strand, no plot "device" at all. There are no glamorous deeds, no John Harkless cheers and streamers. Indeed, in "gallery plays" "The Magnificent Ambersons" is deplorably lacking. George is a hero only to Lucy and Isabel, and even Lucy quite sees through him. Though, indeed, in Lucy

we still have with us that last infirmity of this author's chivalrous mind, the heroine.

All this is not, by any means, to say that "The Magnificent Ambersons" makes no emotional appeal. There are human lives flowing on, faithfully, sympathetically rendered. If there is no stage villain there is a truly villainous thing—town gossip. And from it here springs a sufficiently poignant situation between a man and a woman. There is suspense as to its termination. There is a peculiarly fascinating touch, and more, of scientific psychology in the interpretation of a son's instinctive feelings toward his mother's lover. There is a full-length and amiably sardonic portrait of the wholesome disillusionment of a very tropical egoism. There is, in the picture of the later days of George's Aunt Fanny an admirable Shabby Genteel Story, in the most modern vein of humorous observation. The circumstances under which, for the final time, the chastened George pronounces the word "Riff-raff," is a stroke alone worth reading a whole novel to enjoy. That, flatly, is immense. And upon visualizing its creation one recalls the occasion upon which Thackeray is said to have slapped his hand upon the table (at the point where

Rawdon Crawley threw Lord Steyne's jewel, torn from Becky's bosom, and cut open the noble forehead; and Becky for the first time admired her husband) and exclaimed "That is genius!"

There is, in "The Magnificent Ambersons" the customary (and characteristically home-spun) Tarkington "moral," the "lesson," which is in this case, to wit: "For all the 'ideals of life' which the world, in its rolling, inconsiderately flattens out to nothingness, the least likely to retain a profile is that ideal which depends upon inheriting money." In other words, as "The Magnficent Ambersons" illustrates, money doesn't care whom it belongs to—neither does life; and whatever isn't of the spirit is tricky stuff. The psychic note at the close is presented in a scene (the scene in which "Lopa" of the other world, speaking through the lips of the somnambulistic "medium," Mrs. Horner, communicates a message from the deceased Isabel Amberson Minafer to Eugene Morgan) which it would run Arnold Bennett pretty hard to surpass in this, his particular kind of brilliant reporting. Then, after being so determined through so many pages, Mr. Tarkington falls for a bit of the sentimental in his (more or less) "happy ending."

BROOME STREET STRAWS

The total effect of "The Magnificent Ambersons" is, as a Tarkington novel, extraordinary. One begins it with lively entertainment. Along toward the middle something appears to be the matter. The abounding verve which we have come to expect from Mr. Tarkington does not seem to be present in this patient, earnest progress in the accumulation of detail in elucidating the growth of character. There are times when one is even reminded of Mr. James's remark concerning some of the passages of Turgénieffe (or perhaps it was Mr. Gosse said it of Tolstoi) that he appeared to have gone to sleep though keeping on writing. No one of the characters in the book is as sharp in outline as, say, either one of the sisters-in-law in "The Turmoil." The slow development of George appears to creak a bit now and then. And altogether one is not so comfortable as one expected to be. Then comes a third stage, when it comes over one that his queer feeling arises from the fact that this book has not the particular kind of excellence which we look for from Mr. Tarkington—but is excellent in another way. One lays down the book considerably impressed; impressed with the performance, the adequate accomplishment of a high resolve; and

impressed with one's reflections as to this figure, the still new Mr. Tarkington, ever on the grow, in the service of a durable native American literature.

XI

HOOSIER HIGHLIGHTS

IT was like this:

I was getting confoundedly tired of this business. I had lived under a cloud in New York city for a dozen years or so. One summer recently I was hounded all over England. And why? Why, because I "came from" Indiana—and never had set eyes on that Hoosier bunch. What made the thing still worse was that I was in the writing way myself. A small potato in it, it is true, but so, I was continually bumping up against people interested in that kind of thing. It seemed to be thought I was some sort of a fake Indianian and had probably been born in London or some such place as that.

You see I left Indiana in infancy almost, hot on a trail of art and letters. That was the trouble, I suppose; the reason I have never come across. I should, doubtless, have stuck around a while longer, until I had got the potent, native soil more

rubbed in. However, that's not the point here.

I will begin with "the most uniformly pleasing of our novelists," as the publishers' publicity notices label him. One day Mr. Nicholson wrote me a letter. I had recently reviewed him at some length in a New York newspaper, shortly after he had (in the *Atlantic Monthly*) with a fanfare of trumpets divorced the gay lady, his muse for many seasons, romance. My article, to contain talk, uncovered his past long hidden till here, set forth how he had begun his literary life as an intensely intense poet, had been erstwhile a perfectly sensible editorial writer for the *Indianapolis News,* had one time begot an obscure, regular history book called "The Hoosiers," and it declared (I remember) that the germ of earnestness had always been in his blood. He wrote me to say "much obliged" for my efforts to grasp his inward spirit, and to ask where the Dickens I had got all the dope. And in his letter he wrote precisely like an incorrigible romanticist.

Mr. Nicholson writes letters like those that it is said all the while now-a-days nobody writes any more, like those in the books in libraries, in volumes of "Life and Letters;" leisurely, gossipy

letters, whimsical, crotchety, sportive letters, and very grandiloquent. As follows:

He first wrote me, as he said, to "lift the perpendicular hand," and return thanks; as (he said) "it's a blamed pleasant experience, I assure you, to be written of once in awhile as though you were not a common blackguard." So (he graciously said) he "hove a deep sigh" when he read my well-meaning attempt at an appreciation. Somehow apropos here, more or less, there was a book, too, he would have "before night darkeneth the White River Valley," as a mention of it he had seen had "increased his respirations," and had caused his "father's sword over the mantel to rattle." As to rattling, he spoke of Stevenson, "rattling at the world's shutters right along,—kicked now and then by some sour degenerate, but turning up smiling at the next inn to tell stories and raise his voice in some old tavern catch." He recalled, roundabout by the way, a gentleman of my name whom he had once seen "in a red fez, marching in the street, or something." A memory which went "back to the well by the gate when life was young."

Mr. Nicholson, it is pleasant to note, is very probably the worst typist going. All his letters

(that I have) are typed, though he writes by hand the address on the envelopes. Very likely he can't work envelopes in the machine.

Like all happily inhabited by the letter-writing bug, he rambles along in talk about himself. Like all happily ardent souls he sees himself a very romantic figure. He is a delightfully sympathetic autobiographer. He sees, so: "How I used to wash bottles in a drug store after graduating from school at 15, started to become a printer, but was put to pushing the merry barrow all over the town; learned shorthand a la Copperfield; monkeyed with the law; fell under the spell of Lew Wallace and J. W. R.; made rhymes, studied Greek, French, Italian all by himself by a tiny wood stove (there being not the traditional fireplace to lie down before a la Lincoln); and here I am, by the grace of God, a broken spar on the shoals of the river of time."

"Speaking of letters," he says, "aren't those dandy ones of W. V. Moody's?" (They were then appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly.*) He takes a whack at "litry log-rolling," apparently a pet goat of his. And then again the lyric swashbuckle note: "It's a dark day, lad, and raining like the devil. . . We're all going to die anyway,

but let's wait until tomorrow afternoon, or the day after, if the pale rider wax not hotly impatient." And "with not a lick of work done this gloomy day," he would "wrap his cloak about him and go forth into the night. . . hit the trail for the bazars of Washington street, get credit at the bookshop, and go to bed and read until the rooster crows!" Whether or not he gets a "Life," I shall be eagerly expecting a volume of Mr. Nicholson's "Letters" when he shall have gone.

But I must now be hastening on back to Indiana. The gentleman in the red fez was a Shriner uncle of mine, locally a very grand personage in his day; and his memory I counted as something of a card of introduction to the big-wigs of today back home.

A person of cantankerous mind might find something incongruous in this fact. Mr. Nicholson is, of course, ardently a provincial American, a devoted historian of the middle West, one happy to be a chronicler of Hoosierdom. You might expect such a one to affect a dwelling racy of the soil. There are abundant examples in Indiana of a type of old mansion (my father lived in one) which connotes to a reflective mind the period of the civil war. But Mr. Nicholson's house is a

very beautiful reproduction of a mansion of colonial architecture of the time of the American revolution, when there was no Indiana. However, let us not quarrel about that. It's a handsome house.

It was not there, though, that I went. In reply to my announcement to the gentleman I sought that I was even come I received directions which enabled me to find for the tryst a place of great secrecy. His name, he warned me, was not to be found in the directory on the wall in the hall; nor did the telephone book reveal these quarters, nor was any name upon the door there that was his. But I was to knock and it would be opened to me. It would have been an added pleasure, I think, if I had been required to rap three times and whistle low.

At the top and the back of the tallest office building in town this place is. It seems to me that at my knock some one called, "Come in." At any rate I found myself directly in a commodious chamber in effect richly furnished as an office. (In such regal places do successful authors work now-a-days; I know one who occupies the bridal suite, so to say, of the Harriman Bank Building.) And I discovered a tall, strap-

ping gentleman looming before me and extending a horizontal hand. We smoked many cigarettes.

A Frenchman looks like a Frenchman, a Teuton like a Teuton, an Englishman like an Englishman, I thought as I regarded the cast of features before me. What I should say about them, if anybody should ask me, is that they have to an unusual degree, in one word, an Indiana look. I can not tell you definitely what this look looks like. It looks like an idea. An idea of Indiana. George Ade, according to his photographs, has it. It is all about the streets of Indianapolis. It is much in evidence at the Indiana State Fair. I could spot it, with one eye shut, on Broadway. Mr. Nicholson's frame I should call loosely hung. His manners decidedly peaceful, and his movements leisurely. A contemplative person. It occurred to me, I remember, that in applying for a position as a traveling salesman he would not be likely to be regarded as an "aggressive" "live wire." As for sweet reasonableness of temper I don't think Matthew Arnold had anything on him. His judgments appeared to be advanced with an openness to correction.

The spectacle of the world appeared to afford

him a continuous fund of quiet amusement. And at whatever about him was entertaining, in the appearance or the sayings or the doings of mankind, he seemed to be touched by a very simple delight, as you would delight in the drolleries of a child. As an example of this I would cite the story he told me of Henry James in Indianapolis and something about a barber—if only I could at all remember it. His humor, I suppose you might say, was lambent. If you talked that way, you could say that he was a kindly, lovable man; or a dear, delightful man, as you chose. Certainly I found him a remarkably friendly sort of cove, with, apparently, refreshingly little to do.

Now, I never could understand this thing about reminiscences. Thomas Carlyle, or somebody like that, writes his impressions of some celebrated man he saw once about fifty years before. Pages of conversation are given, as if word for word, in quotation marks. The hair-brush on a dressing table is drawn in stipple-like detail. Fifty years is but as yesterday. Though I enjoyed myself keenly that summer day not so long ago, I can't remember a thing we talked about, except the gentleman in red fez; the fact that he (Mr.

Nicholson) was very fond of living in Indiana; that, as he said reflectively, he did not know many writers, and that the matter of the secrecy of the place of his office was a provision for quiet and against interruption. He also said, I remember, in speaking of New York newspapers, that he took such a one, as looking it over gave him an excuse for a moment's delay in beginning work each morning. He spoke, too, affectionately of "Tark."

But his great idea was that I must by all means see Riley. "The Poet" had then not long been published, and the author said that its intention was to strengthen the conception of this poet as a real poet, and against the notion prowling around some quarters that he was just a kind of "litry feller" and "cracker-barrel poet." "We will make a pilgrimage," he declared, "to the home of the good, gray poet." It were better, he said, that we go together, as then he could draw out the poet, and at the prospect of this performance he appeared to be very pleasantly tickled. As I was taking my leave he found a long envelope dropped through the mail slot. It was not, he announced, a rejected manuscript, but some kind of a document concerning an orphan asylum

[(or some such thing) of which he was a trustee. Not since he wrote poetry, he replied, had any manuscript come back to him. No, he never wrote poetry any more.

For some reason, which I do not recall, the plan of visiting Lockerbie Street was thwarted. But Mr. Nicholson was so keen on the idea of the meeting that he graciously arranged to pull it off at his club. Though it was a pity I was not to see J. W. R. at his house, as there he was to be viewed, so to say, in his most becoming frame. However, "the doctor," as Mr. Nicholson continually, caressingly called him, was to lunch with us. This again did not come to pass. The poet was delayed and we lunched with a doctor of another sort, a medical gentleman, who, it appears, has a very large practice and a very distinguished one, as he would seem to be physician to the entire literati of Indianapolis, and sage spiritual counselor and intellectual crony, as well. This affable gentleman appeared to be a sort of human anthology of poetry and (one of the most attractive things a man can be) an ardent Bellocian.

I have made an extensive study of clubs. I collect clubs, as you may say; not in the sense that I "belong" to many, but in this, that I make

it a point to possess with my mind the cosmopolitan variety I have seen. One of the most winning clubs then in my collection is one that I picked up, so to say, in Indianapolis, the University Club there. For one gracious thing, it is housed in one of those mellow, old architectural piles of which I have spoken, a house which in the sentiment of its effect is like to a gentleman of the old school; and it stands on the patrician and park-like North Meridian street in a dainty little lawn. To the original two-story, red brick building has been added a third story perfect in its recognition of the distinction of character of the original design. Within the high-ceilinged rooms of this simple, noble, one-time residence broods an atmosphere from out the past of old-fashioned culture. A much pleasanter place altogether, certainly more soothing, than the stately and mighty Reform Club. And I think you ought to go to Indianapolis just to have some one give you a card there. There I met a sojourner in Indianapolis, one Bliss Carman, who informed me that his business in these parts was "to learn to write prose." And there I met one of the most agreeable persons you ever saw. I hope, by chance, you know him. Hewitt Hanson How-

land, who does something or other in the way of running the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

After luncheon the doctor came for us in his car. It is his habit thus to take the air every pleasant afternoon. I was introduced to him as another "litry feller," and, too, he also remembered quite well the gentleman in the red fez. That appears to be one of the things about Indianapolis. If you happen to "belong to" one of the "old families" you are, it seems, all to the mustard. Charming notion, I think.

Now, many elderly gentlemen are very trying. They are deaf and you have to shout at them. They are failing in memory and unable from moment to moment to recall your name. They mumble what they say and it is a great strain for you to have to appear to get them all the while. They have the sulks, or they are very lofty. They are all sorts of difficult things. But the doctor I found a very amiable and intelligent young man, remarkably keen, for one thing, on the retention of every syllable of my name. Plays then going were discussed. And the thing I brought away with me from this altogether delightful drive was this. Somewhere about the time of his youth Mr. Riley had seen the finest

grave-digger that ever played in "Hamlet." He bragged immensely about this grave-digger. None he had ever seen since, he declared, could hold a candle to that one. And as, at length, I alighted from the doctor's car I received a final impression of a hale and humorous young soul.

Of Mr. Tarkington, also acquired as a friend during this visit, I have had my say at sufficient length elsewhere.

I hope, at any rate, that this article will pass as a sort of birth certificate of mine, attesting the fact that I was born in Indiana.

XII

WHAT IS A LIBRARY?

"WELL," inquired my friend, at length—we had been for several hours looking over his books—"what do you think of my library?"

"Of course," I replied, "you have not, properly speaking, a library at all." My friend looked up at me with quizzical surprise. "Though," I added, "I think, as my comments have indicated, that you have many interesting books."

I stopped him as he was about to speak. Then I helped myself to another of my friend's cigars, lit it carefully, leaned back in my chair, placed the tips of my fingers together, and delivered the following disquisition:

"A library," I said, "may consist of six volumes, or it may contain six thousand; but any number of books brought together in one place,

no more, of itself, constitutes a library than a pile of bricks can be called a house."

My friend lit his pipe, and I continued.

"Books are simply the material from which a library is fashioned. You have, in a chaotic state, some interesting material; but, like most people, you have merely picked up numerous odds and ends of books that at the moment have appealed to you as you have gone along." (This mention of my friend's notions of book-buying, which I find are so general, I offer to the sophisticated as an apology for my naïvete.) "In this," I went on, in my desire to help him to a more rare enjoyment of books, "you have had pleasure. And the resulting jumble, of course, throws considerable light upon your character and idiosyncrasies of taste, so may be regarded as an interesting human document, like the note books, say, of a novelist. But it is a very inartistic utterance of your mind; because it is quite desultory, often misleading, sometimes tedious or superfluous; an incoherent expression of your personality. Now a library—hardly any one has a library—is a structure, like a work of architecture, a composition, like a drama or a piece of music; like them it is the intelligible, conscious,

and disciplined expression, in a concrete substance, of an idea.

"The first thing essential to a work of art, like a library, is restraint. Your conglomeration of books would much more nearly approach being a library if vou discarded about one-third of them: those that you have come by incidentally, or own simply perfunctorily. To possess the dignity and distinction entitling it to the name, a library must be composed of the significant. With calm and tutored reserve," I said, "buy two real books every year rather than dissipate upon every gim-crack that catches the eye. Have *the* book upon a subject instead of a clutter of different ones; don't, to take an elementary instance, have a dozen little books about Rembrandt, have 'Michel,' at least first; afterwards perhaps you can judiciously supplement 'Michel.' And have *the* editions. It is very careless of you to have this Luce 'John Synge': it is not good breeding; you should have the Maunsel edition. If you can't get the right thing at once, wait. Nothing is so good for the character of a library as waiting. By waiting, so much truck is eliminated; you discover after a time that you really don't want what you wanted. You save yourself the

trouble of correcting mistakes. I know the owner of an excellent library who has devoted his attention in the matter for the last couple of years almost entirely to seeking how he could improve his library by what he could take away.

"Nothing more brilliant could be said of a library than Mr. Whistler's dictum about a picture: that at any stage of its growth it should be finished as far as it has gone.

"Let me illustrate. Dr. Eliot, Arnold Bennett and numerous others have fashioned libraries, as they have been designated, before me; but, so far as I can recall, these would all more aptly be described as courses in education. I undertake to suggest to a hypothetical gentleman of culture a library, as we are here considering it. The English Bible, in the 'Tudor Translations,' in six volumes; a set of the 'Singer' Shakespeare, the edition in ten volumes, printed by Charles Whittingham at the Chiswick Press in 1826, with the fine old wood cuts; a 'Moxon' or 'Pickering' Milton, Shelley and Keats; a copy of the first edition of the Andrew Lang 'Odyssey'; the Grant Richards three-volume Florio Montaigne; 'Don Quixote' in the 'Library of English Classics'; Berenson's 'Drawings of Florentine Painters,'

two volumes folio; D. S. MacCall's 'Nineteenth Century Art,' large paper edition; and," I said, slurring this, for I am weak on history, "some crack history. This collection I should regard as a first-rate specimen of a general English library, capable certainly of much amplication, but complete in its way so far as it goes, possessing the funadmentals, a substantial foundation on which to build, containing the cornerstones of its various departments, suggesting not inadequately the literature of the world, intelligently respectful to the art of printing, and, too, warmly temperamental.

"An austere intellect might rest content with such a collection. But the gentleman we have in our eye, let us say, is of a restless disposition, with a constructive turn. So he goes on, thoughtfully adding a block here to bridge some chasm, putting a stone there to bring up his perspective, by brooding he balances his values—he has been wondering whether he should have six pounds of William Hazlett over against three ounces of Greek Tragedy—adding a touch of light decoration, a little Max Beerbohm, to relieve severity.

"Or he is singularly fond of some one period or another, or of Laurence Sterne, or George

Moore, or Mr. James, or especially interested in philosophy or Aubrey Beardsley or classical literature; so he devotes one corner of his wall to his specialty. He enriches and caresses his 'Arthur Symons,' say, until he flatters himself it is complete—but no, he discovers a copy of an early volume in better condition than his, and so, with it he supplants the one he possesses."

"This hypothetical gentleman," I said to my friend, "has the most civilized toy known to the mind of man."

XIII

AN INSPIRED LIBRARY

HOW I wish I were Anatole France! I should like, of course, to be M. Anatole France for a number of reasons: I should like to be, like M. France, one of the most learned men of my time; and is it not superb to wear, like M. France, great learning lightly, as he himself with characteristic felicity says, "like a flower?"

But these are not the reasons I have at the moment in mind. I should like to be M. France to portray my friend Mr. W——B——, one of that race of beings so near to the heart of M. France. Ah! how exquisite is that sympathy with which "Monsieur Anatole," himself born in a book-shop and brought up among the old book-sellers on the quays of the Seine, interprets the soul which lives for books!

And yet my friend, Mr. W——B——, has so etherealized the consuming passion of his life that

he transcends even the imagination of M. France, the Good Genius of the bibliophile.

I became acquainted with Mr. B—— through meeting him in his professional capacity, that of book-seller in a large shop. Have you ever, perchance, in your worldly, insolent fashion, commanded the services of this person?—a youthful-looking man (of perennial youth, I ween, like him of Glanvil's page, "that Oxford scholar poor"), though, upon closer inspection, of near middle age; slender of frame; tallish, though stooped (as another of the race, one Charles Lamb, hast said) with "much peering"; a distinguished baldness; and garbed (within the memory of man) in a worn alpaca coat, too short behind, the tape to hang it by broken loose at one end and protruding above his collar behind.

That is my friend. Bookselling is not a lucrative calling; it furnishes Mr. B—— a shelter from the storm, no Falstaffian paunch,—but he is not poor. His riches, there he is opulent, are his library.

Mr. B—— assures me his library is one of the most distinguished in the world. I have no doubt of it. My friend did me the honor to invite me to his dwelling place. He lives in the heart of

that Old World quarter of the town still called by inhabitants fond of it, "Old Greenwich Village"; where the streets, planted as cowpaths, lanes and alleys long before the city plan, are often eccentric in their going; a region, in its prime not unaristocratic, now generally of humble estate, of brick three stories (or two and a half, gable roofed, with dormer windows), old white doors (and fine dull black ones), ancient brass knockers, tall hammered-iron newel posts beside the entrance steps, and ivied walls.

"Now," said Mr. B—— in his humble apartment, "the point is to have the best edition existing of each thing. Here, you see, is my Burton's 'Anatomy,' the edition in three volumes, edited by the Rev. A. B. Shilleto, M. A., half vellum, large paper. A shop I frequent had a set recently at $25. I have that down. The 'Rubaiyat' bothered me for some time; there are such a mass of rubbish editions. At length I found what I wanted; Methuen, 1900, Six Shillings, very inexpensive, but a satisfying book to contemplate, an appeasing volume.

"My subjects," my friend went on, "are all classified, and each alphabetised. Here is my French Art, beginning with the handsome 'Lady

Dike,' now 'O. P.' I saw a splendid set, half levant, $100. Here is a recent accession, 'French Line Engravings of the Late XVIIth Century' limited edition of 150 copies, $100.

"See my books on Durer, a reasonably complete collection, I think, omitting practically nothing of moment. Here is the 'Literary Remains,' Conway, the best commentary. Here are the 'crack' reproductions, 'Oeuvre d'Albert Durer. Reroduit et Publie, par Amand-Durand, Goupil,' $75.

"Here is my list of books on printing, very comprehensive."

It was so my friend went on.

"And do you really," I said, "expect to own all of these books sometime?"—but, hold! Perhaps I have forgot to explain: Mr. B——'s library consists not actually of books, but of memoranda; it is, in fine, a patient and loving compilation, a catalogue, of great intelligence, of the finest books, books he would like to have had had he the means.

My question was gross. I repented it instantly. Mr. B—— does own his books. How is it that William Hazlitt has it? That a man owns that which he can appreciate; he owns it, that is, with

his mind, even though as a material object of property it is legally, by right of monetary purchase, in the possession of another—who, I believe Hazlitt remarks, is often incapable of owning it himself in the refined sense of intellectual possession.

Nobly Quixotic Mr. B—— (only the noble can be Quixotic) his is the realest and truest of libraries, a living idea, a great and religious faith, reduced to the simplest symbols.

XIV

THE AMAZING FAILURE OF O. HENRY

THE most striking thing about the O. Henry controversy which, every now and then, crackles about here and there is that the belligerents of both sides overlook altogether, apparently, the pith of the whole matter. That O. Henry's achievements were remarkable is fairly indisputable; that, particularly in view of what he did accomplish, he failed most signally in certain of the features essential to fiction of the first class, one would think would be equally clear to any critical mind. And, indeed, perhaps it is.

What, briefly, were O. Henry's momentous triumphs, and in what was it that he so lamentably failed? He had in a high degree the vocation for writing. That is, he was impelled by instinct to write, just as a dog is urged by instinct to bark at noises in the night and to fly at persons of unprepossessing appearance, designated as tramps.

His was that ingrowing nature which has to have an outlet, which automatically reacts to the phenomena about it by communicating its impressions in a form of art. Persons of this type frequently are praised by laudatory biographers for what is termed "indomitable perseverance" in the face of obstacles to the fulfilment of their dominating impulses. The determination which they manifest, however, is not a matter of their own volition. The hen will lay the egg. O. Henry, like the hen, was a creative artist.

He had the striking insularity of mind of the artist, a thing very imperfectly comprehended by many otherwise intelligent critics. The ignorance of artists of things which do not concern their purpose has made innumerable commentators stand aghast. I doubt whether the late John H. Twatchman could have told you offhand who was Vice-President. Riley naïvely confessed that he did not know enough to vote. Walter Pater acknowledged that though he had heard of his contemporary Stevenson, he had not read him. And one of Stevenson's latest biographers laments Stevenson's preference for acquainting himself with the water-front of a town to the total neglect

of that town's monuments of culture a few streets away. The late H. C. Bunner, speaking perhaps with greater wisdom than he suspected, said: "I have missed art galleries and palaces and theatres and cathedrals (cathedrals particularly) in various and sundry cities, but I don't think I ever missed a slum." Genius is not the child of culture, or rather of what is commonly understood to be culture.

A man of extraordinary mind not infrequently would find himself very imperfectly at home in the society of persons of ordinary enlightenment. This peculiarity of minds of a special order is well explained by Schopenhauer in his amusing essay "On Noise:" "If you cut up a large diamond into little bits, it will entirely lose the value it had as a whole; and an army divided up into small bodies of soldiers, loses all its strength. So a great intellect sinks to the level of an ordinary one, as soon as it is interrupted and disturbed, its attention distracted and drawn from the matter in hand; for its superiority depends upon its power of concentration—of bringing all its strength to bear upon one theme, in the same way as a concave mirror collects into one point all the rays of light that strike upon it." A great artist, says

George Moore, apropos of Charles Keene, "is he who is most racy of his native soil, he who has most persistently cultivated his talent in one direction, and in one direction only, he who has repeated himself most often, he who has lived upon himself the most avidly." In the matter of what is commonly called culture itself, Mr. Brownell has pointed out, as "a peculiarity worth remark," that the culture of Mr. James, who "passes popularly for preeminently the novelist of culture," is, "though unmistakably culture, culture of a highly specialized kind," of "an unusually contemporary kind." The horse does not care for meat, and sticks to food which its instinct tells it is good for it; and the insularity of genius would be an admirable subject for a valuable essay.

O. Henry was gifted with unusual capacity for ignorance, even for a great artist. Passionately preoccupied with his own *flair,* his mind was undistracted by any of the interests which engage the attention of educated people. Further, as an artist, his life was especially fortunate in its combination of conditions adverse to ordinary happiness. The gods loved him. They did not confer upon him the great boon, for the artist, of lifelong ill health, which has so often been the oppor-

tunity of genius, if not the occasion of it. M. Camille Mauclair, indeed, in his eminently provocative study of Watteau, draws attention to the specially intellectual character of consumption, traces the action of this malady on the imagination, and the effect of this strange illness on the artistic organism, sensibility, character, and work. But they, the gods, abundantly caressed O. Henry with the chastening rod. O. Henry did not have sufficient brains to possess considerable worldly ambition, and so could not be benignantly frustrated of it, as Swift was. He was simply an artist. And all that the gods could do to cherish the talent of a healthy man they did.

He was shielded from the selfish interests of smug business fortunes and the possession of a permanent abode. The enchanted rôle given as the dearest blessing to the children of the immortal gods was his: he was a rolling stone, a detached, disinterested spectator of the affairs of other men—greater felicity hath no artist soul. The development of his peculiar powers was secured against the crass world's spoilation by the befriending walls of penury, until, when it no longer mattered, a brief and sudden prosperity descended upon him. He enjoyed the

priceless seclusion of the outcast; at the precise moment when such a situation would be most profitable to the growth of his spirit he was cast into that unique retreat from life's warfare, a prison; and there, by a turn of destiny so miraculous that it is humorous, he was employed in night work, swathed in solitude and leisure. Finally, when he had carried his art as far as he was capable, consummated its perfection in its kind, his devoted friends the gods took him quickly from a world with which, as an artist, he had no further concern.

Before the dawn of the brilliant day of Charles Dana Gibson everybody in America who drew with a pen drew more or less after the charming fashion of Edwin Abbey, a style which is in effect quaintly old-fashioned to-day. Directly following the heyday of Gibson everybody drawing drew to some extent in the Gibson manner. After the great modernizing impress which Gibson placed upon this fluent art pen-drawing could never be the same again. It had gained much—in directness, conciseness, piquancy of effect, and popular appeal. And it had lost much—in sheer loveliness, in sensitivity, and æsthetic charm. Before Gibson, an artist simply drew with a pen

now and then, as Rembrandt did, as the medium most congenial to his mood of the moment. Mr. Gibson, by the domination of his power, and making a business of pen-drawing, "fixed" the art in a technical form peculiar to itself and distinct from all others, with something of the finality with which Chaucer secured the position of the English tongue. Even so, O. Henry struck a die for brief tales among our countrymen. Having fashioned his form, he displayed prodigious powers of production, turning out several hundred stories in a year.

Now, nothing more convincingly demonstrates O. Henry's potency as an interpreter of the human heart than this: If you say anything at all inclined to subtract from O. Henry's glory it "riles" great numbers of people to the point almost of incoherent rage. Many of these persons occupy positions of eminence in the public eye. One of the most conspicuous, ardent, and perhaps I should say vociferous, champions of O. Henry is Professor Stephen Leacock. Professor Leacock is highly representative of the spirit of, so to say, his "party"—for the O. Henry matter has become an affair of "sides"—in that though he feels something very keenly he is unable to ar-

ticulate his feelings and has resort to pounding on the table, figuratively speaking, and calling everybody damn fools who, he imagines, may not feel the fine frenzy that he does. In this unhappy condition of seeing red all about him he even stumbles and falls into the puerile and threadbare attitude of "cussing out" the "high-brows" as an insular lot of superannuated minds, whereas, as a matter of fact, professional, jaded critics were among the first persons to find in O. Henry freshness and originality.

Professor Leacock's bald denunciations on the one hand are accompanied by equally bald affirmations on the other. He cries out that O. Henry is a great writer, but he never shows just why. I should say that Professor Leacock is a rotten bad critic, and, conceiving the function of criticism to be the taking of a thing apart to see what it is that makes it tick as it does, I have endeavored to point out certain facts to act as a scaffolding in support of my statement of this unfortunate truth. One of Professor Leacock's oratorical gestures takes this form: O. Henry's humor "is not the comic wit that explodes the reader into a huge guffaw of laughter and vanishes. His humor is of that deep quality that smiles at life

itself and mingles our amusement with our tears." While this trite and febrile utterance cannot be regarded as of the nature of criticism, as it is merely a declaration and illuminates nothing in O. Henry's work, it may be accepted as gathering into itself and conveying by a sort of dumb gesticulation a popular feeling, of vast area, responding with touching naïvete to the now illustrious genius of O. Henry.

In view of what he did accomplish the most striking thing about O. Henry (to a reflective mind) is his utter failure to achieve that which has ever been the most outstanding mark of a great creative writer. In the last analysis the play has never been the thing. "Hamlet" would fall down without Hamlet. O. Henry created no characters, no figures which, as figures, abide in the mind after the chance circumstances in which we found them have fallen away from them in the memory. In all the floods of talk about O. Henry none has ever heard mentioned a single human being of his creation, a fictitious character made more real to us than our mortal neighbor, a figure which ever stands out in the mind a personification of certain universal human qualities, as, for instance, Don Quixote does, or My Uncle

Toby, or Colonel Newcome, Mr. Micawber, Richard Swiveller, Mrs. Gamp, and on and on, figures whose names have become current words.

And the argument in reply which arises in the mind is a fallacy. The history of the short story will not support the idea that a big canvas is required to body forth a big or memorable character. Boccaccio drew his Patient Griselda in a story short for a modern magazine. What character in fiction is better known than Rip Van Winkle? There is Old Scrooge of "A Christmas Carol." A reader who has forgotten exactly what happened in "A Window in Thrums" will suck much pleasure from his recollection of the characters, as characters. Mulvaney is not likely to be forgotten. Dr. Jekyll will probably last forever. And, to take characters that endure by virtue of their vividness rather than by reason of their humanity, there are Sherlock Holmes, and Raffles.

Why is it that O. Henry's characters constitute the least successful element of his fiction? In the answer to this will be found a just recognition of the mortal limitations of his art—for, after all, the supreme test of a creative writer's abiding interest is the humanity of his characters. In all

the long list of O. Henry's stories we seldom find one with a perfunctory or desultory inspiration. They are very populous. It cannot be said that his characters do not possess a good deal of typical quality. They are never commonplace; each one of them is intimately observed and thoroughly respected as an individuality. Indeed, his pieces are not only attentively described, some of them are very artistically and even beautifully carved. Why is it that they have so little relief?

The short story as O. Henry conceived it and moulded it is essentially an artificial thing, it turns on a juggler's trick, it is like the ingenius game of the three shells and the little black ball. It depends for its effect on the "kick" at the end, which has been the sole aim from the beginning. That, the kick, is what is remembered. The story is less preoccupied with the characters than about the situation—the predicament—in which they are placed. The story is chiefly concerned with what they are to do when confronted with the complications the author's ingenuity devises for them,—how they are to "get away with it." These complications are often very slight, in order to show, or at least showing, what trifles control destinies; sometimes they are grave enough, and ex-

hibit the conflict of the soul with warring desires and distracting perplexities. But their situation rather than the characters themselves is what constitutes the claim, the *raison d'etre,* of the story in which they figure, the interest in which, accordingly, becomes analogous to that of a game in which the outcome rather than the pieces monopolizes the attention. And it is right here that the art of O. Henry and all the flourishing school of fiction which he begot "falls down" in the presence of such a classic, as, say, Bunner's "The Story of a New York House," which hasn't a kick in it, but is pure art, without a touch of artifice, from first to last, a thing of enduring beauty, of consummate perfection.

XV

AT MRS. WIGGER'S

AT a small family table apart sit the Darrows. Mr. Darrow is not modern. He is a sort of antique, like a carpet-bag, or spinning-wheel, or a melodeon, a rather rare and well-preserved, though dusty, instrument of a past generation, a highly serviceable article in its day, and at that time universally regarded with respect, but seen in the light of the superior present as something humorous, like hoop-skirts. He is a gentleman of an old school. He is the last leaf on the tree. And we smile at the old forgotten bough where he clings. Mr. Darrow wears an old-fashioned, musty, full cut of whiskers, parted towards the sides from the middle. His hair is combed upwards and back from his forehead, the gray ghost of some tonsorial trick deceased. In the old days they built houses to last, as everybody knows, and an old New England house is as good today, after its ninety-nine years, as

thousands of your light, flimsy, hurriedly built, modern frame structures, put up, like canned goods, for sale. It has in addition, for the seeing eye, the charm of a mellow and venerable age. It was in the old days that was built Mr. Darrow's old, odd, skirt coat. And it is with it even as it is with our ancestor's houses.

Mr. Darrow's manner is the product of and an echo from that past time when the word "genteel" flourished; when it was customary to say "six ladies and four gentlemen," where we would now say "six women and four men." He has something about him, too, that suggests old-time Sunday schools. He looks like an illustration in a very old magazine of a Sunday-school superintendent. He vividly recalls to a lodger the character of the head of a family that was presented in the curious old school readers of a lodger's mother and father. These readers were, a lodger believes, called "MacGuffy's," and are perhaps most likely to be found to-day in old garrets. The head of the family there presented was often, if a lodger remembers correctly, described as by calling "a merchant." In stature he was tall, somewhat slender, dignified, graceful, and very straight, with something of a military bearing,

not unlike Colonel Newcome in Thackeray's own drawings. Invariably he wore a very handsome pair of whiskers, dressed in the fashion still held to by Mr. Darrow. In the cuts where a lodger has seen him he appeared walking in the park with his neatly rolled umbrella, a very spirited horse with extremely slender, tapering limbs, and bearing a gentlemanly rider, wearing a white tall hat, sped across the background; or he was shown seated at the head of his table, preparing to serve his family; or, again (he was a very domesticated man), he sat in the midst of his attentive and respectful family circle and read aloud from some instructive book (a lodger knows from his character that it could have been no other than an instructive book); or he strolled with his handsome, noble-looking sons, and discoursed to them concerning some moral object lesson. In the text which these cuts illuminated so well the discourses were given in rather big type. To describe it in one word, the society of this gentleman could not fail to be edifying to the young.

Mr. Darrow, of course, is governed by the traditions of the past rather than the altered conditions of the present. He considers that it would be apostasy to read any but a Republican news-

paper. The independent press has not come in for him; certainly not independent politics. In his code, to vote the straight Republican ticket is the only thing compatible with principle, and honor. And, too, it would no doubt be a great blow to him to see a child of his leave the Methodist Church for any other denomination. In his mind the Christian religion is nearly synonymous with Methodism.

One statement is to be made concerning Mr. Darrow which, a lodger would say, did not apply to his prototype. The head of the family in our father's readers was, from all that appeared, in comfortable circumstances enough. It would hardly have been compatible for so exemplary a person to have been poor. Mr. Darrow, however, judged by any ambitious standards, has been, a lodger is afraid, somewhat of a failure as "a merchant." His is hardly a successful nature. And, too, the world has rushed past him.

The observer of life should not be surprised to learn that Mrs. Darrow is an invalid. Circumstances of this nature are often reserved to be added unto unsuccessful natures. It is a way that Providence has. Mrs. Darrow, concerning whom a rumor exists that she had been a fine musician

when she was young, takes a limited number of pupils in music. But her infirmities have made her rather colorless. She does not much interest anybody that a lodger knows of.

Mrs. Darrow's spinster sister, Miss Augusta Rinder, has come to live with her, having no place else, perhaps, to go. One would not say that Miss Rinder would be much in demand. In charity, it will perhaps be sufficient to say, that Miss Augusta lives with her ears plugged with cotton —and go no further.

In this ancient bouquet at Mr. Darrow's table there is one fresh flower. That is Viola. Miss Darrow is just turned sixteen. Like a vase of roses in some dusty old curiosity shop, she sits at board among the grotesque company. Viola's Aunt Augusta evidently sometimes "gets on," so to say, Miss Viola's nerves. Youth and intelligence and beauty is out of patience with anybody who persists in being cranky and silly, decidedly unattractive, decrepit, and old. Miss Darrow is not always respectful towards her aunt. She sometimes tells her that she "makes her tired." Viola pitches into, to put it so, Miss Augusta every now and then. Miss Augusta has to, in the street phrase, "stand for" Viola's tempers, hav-

ing, very likely, nowhere else to go, no legacy to cut off, no defence against the charges against her that she is cranky, repulsive, and old.

To her father, Miss Darrow is invariably respectful. He is a gentleman, albeit of a trifle antiquated intelligence. Things often have to be explained to him by Viola; Viola understands that there is much he does not know; and he is occasionally a little slow at what Mr. Barrie's Scotch characters call the "uptake"; but Viola, deploring this, is patient with him. He is the head of the family, and Viola shows him filial respect. Mrs. Darrow is meek with her daughter, uncontentious; and her daughter does not take advantage of it.

From the biographical data furnished us by Mr. Kay it would appear that Viola, just turned sixteen, had not been a man-hater, or rather boy-hater, in times preceding our arrival upon the scene. She had not then foresworn the juvenile swain. But at present she is in a period of reaction. A newly-acquired maturity reveals to her the silliness of the attraction of the sexes, as newly-acquired wealth discovers to one the vulgarity of the poor. A dawning dignity awakens her disdain. And, as in all reactions, the point of

view like a pendulum swings quite the opposite way. Her scorn of "boys," as expressed at the table, and especially her scorn of those of her girl acquaintances or others of her sex who feel any interest in "boys" is truly admirable. When we, who sit considerably removed from her at another board, one day in conversation touched very transiently on a time in our experience when our heart was not unmoved, Miss Viola turned in her seat and gave us a cold stare which said, This is evidently a very light-minded, frivolous young person. Reactions, however, we are pleased to know, change and pass and turn again. Miss Viola is, we hope, only passing through a period. It would be a pity for so fine a flower to be wasted.

At Mrs. Wigger's boarding house there is next, or perhaps first, in order of personal attraction and social significance, Miss Clip. Miss Clip is justly called "stunning." And dressed in a manner appropriate. She has a backbone like a taut bow. Her conversation deals largely with "cop outs," which in a more pedestrian tongue means conquests. And she is a dashing cut-up, and can do a cake-walk or a turkey trot handsomely. In the parlor she sits down at the piano, screws the

stool seat down to a comfortable height by spinning around on it, and sings. She has a voice that is no good but one that can be sung with effusively. She sings "Any Rags" so that you can not tell it from the performance of any negro wench. This is a great success and hilariously applauded. Her paces are all captivating to the company. She is altogether the real thing.

The most distinguished figure at Mrs. Wigger's is "the Colonel." The Colonel is president, so states his card, of the Anglo-American Consolidated Bond company, with offices on Broad Street. The only other persons directly connected with this corporation, Mr. Kay (who has been down there) says, are a Bostonian-looking office boy and a young woman typist. The landlord of the building and his agent, however, are, presumably, indirectly interested. The Colonel wears a high hat and spats. He is a bulky man, an imposing figure, though sagging a little now. He occasionally comes home in a cab, when is heard on the sidewalk some explosive denunciation of the cab man as an exorbitant scoundrel; later, when the Colonel has come in snorting with indignation, his wife slips down and pays the bill. The Colonel's wife teaches French and

bridge whist. The perplexing part to her of teaching French, Mr. Kay says, is the grammar. She is occasionally heard to say at dinner to the Colonel (at their side table), "No, I don't want any dinner, just a little politeness."

She apologizes to others for the conduct of the Colonel. "Oh," she says, "once he was such a bright man." Mr. Kay says she has written in secret to Mr. Rockefeller and to Mr. Vanderbilt setting forth the case exactly and asking if they can not find some good position for the Colonel. That there are many impostors attempt to prey upon these men, she told Mr. Kay, she knew; but, she knew also that she was not one of them, and so she stated; they could not help see it, she said; besides she did not ask for money, but for honest employment only, nothing more. She had not told the Colonel of her great hopes, she said, for fear if they came to nothing he would be so disappointed.

"Roy" is a dutiful, harmless young man who married a tired-looking young woman, begot some tired-looking children, and maintains the lot somewhere in Brooklyn. He comes regularly to see his people, generally at lunch time, when, presumably, he is "off" for a short time, and sits

and talks awhile. That duty is perhaps his strongest sense might be deduced from the fact that he regularly kisses his aunt Agatha, as well as his mother. His aunt Agatha is the Colonel's wife's maiden sister.

Mr. Mack is a he-don't-know-who-Stevenson-is-and-Stevenson-don't-know-who-he-is kind of a man. They are a common kind. He is fond of jokes of bludgeon force. The playful game of cleaving somebody's head with this tomahawk humor of his and defending his own head in turn serves him as conversation of a recreative order. He is none of your grouches and wherever he is there is sure to be a gay time. His laugh is great to hear.

There is at Mrs. Wigger's, too, a very Pleasant Person. "Y!" she says, her face taking on an additional light of recognition as she advances. "How do you do, ha-ha-ha-ha!"—she ascends the scale in a ripple of laughter as she shakes hands; not that there is anything humorous about it, but just to show that there is no hard feeling, just to display her vivacity. "How is your husband?" she inquires, and laughs again. Her sentences always bubble at the end. She is just delightful.

So thoroughbred a New Yorker is Willie

that he resents allusion to anything as a merit which does not measure up in his eyes as New Yorkish. Mr. Kay, casting about in his perpetual search for conversational material, lit one evening at the table on the idea that a probable explanation of the proverbial fact that the men called to serve in high places, in positions of trust and power, have mostly been country born, was because their early simple country habits of life had builded the constitutions which alone could withstand the strain of their later life. Willie cried out in scorn at this. "Aw!" he said, "we" (referring presumably to youthful New Yorkers) "we are not slow. We don't go to bed with the chickens!" It may be not uninteresting to observe in passing, though this in no wise attacks the truth of Willie's assertion, reinforces it rather, that Willie is so entirely a New Yorker that it is probable that his knoweldge of the habits of chickens is drawn mainly from hearsay; his acquaintance with the bird not unlikely being confined entirely to those at rare intervals served upon Mrs. Wigger's table; and those, as Mr. Kay observes, are hardly representative chickens. Willie frequents in the evening some place of

gathering known as (quoting himself) "the hang-out."

Harvey is a young man at the table who speaks from behind the back of his hand.

Mrs. Wigger should not be ignored in this account of her own boarding house. That would not be polite. Mrs. Wigger is entitled, too, to consideration, if for no other reason, because of her size around. If a fly, hardy fellow! should undertake to travel completely around Mrs. Wigger's equator or belt he would go a far journey.

Many of those little attentions which only a loving woman's hand can give, and which make a married man's lot so much more comfortable than a bachelor's, Mrs. Wigger's sister, Mrs. Taylor, has transferred, since Mr. Taylor deceased is not here to receive them, to Mr. Kay. She guards his health with solicitous advice when he is well; and prescribes remedies, which often she furnishes and even offers to apply or administer, when he is ailing. Man is a clumsy creature, at best. Mrs. Taylor breaks Mr. Kay's egg for him at breakfast. A man needs to have someone to take care of him. He really ought to have his rolls buttered for him. Why will he go blundering along alone!

Mrs. Taylor's only son, Morris, is rather at the wild oats period. He receives favors from rather than confers them upon Mr. Kay. It is his practice when he comes home late in the night without his key and somewhat "bowled up," as he puts it, to escape detection by entering the house through Mr. Kay's window by way of the fire-escape. Mr. Kay contends that he does not resent this as a liberty except that the young man is too full of talk to contain himself until morning. This is undoubtedly the single exception that Mr. Kay has ever taken to conversation anywhere, with any one, at any hour.

James G. Kay, like the scholar in Chaucer, goes "sounding on his way." Carlyle has spoken of man as a "tool-using animal" in distinction from all other creatures. Mr. Kay, we should say, considers that the distinction more properly lies in that man is expressly designed to communicate with his fellows: he is a communicating animal.

Willie's male parent has his abode somewhere in the uppermost regions of the house. Willie may not be "slow" in the sense of being up after the chickens have retired, but, to take Mr. Kay's word for it, Willie's parent is slow if that word

has any connection with the payment of rent. We have it from Mr. Kay that this gentleman is so far behind, the management does not dare to put him out because the sum which he owes and it would thus lose is so appalling. The management supports him in the hope that he may possibly strike gold on Broadway some day and settle his Brobdingnagian bill. After a careful survey of the subject we should say, however, making every allowance for the fallibility of human judgment, that this is a vain delusion. At a distance the shape of his stooped back suggests, more than anything else, the idea of, when you lift an old damp board, those bugs which hurry away in every direction. A gigantic bug he is, a sort of surviving antediluvian, as it were.

Willie's parent, though, does not hurry. He comes and goes, and no man knows whither nor whence. Even Mr. Kay does not know this. He does not board at the house; he has speech with none here, save, presumably, Willie. His voice is not heard, and he looks mostly on the ground. He seems a creature here in a world of men. What is the purpose of his existence? what service does he perform in a world where nought is unfashioned to some end? He is not a producer.

He does not communicate anything. He is, as it were, a graven ornament, a fantastic piece of sculpture, like a monster of Notre Dame, a gothic gargoyle, an architectural oddity and rarity which enriches the cathedral of the world. His purely æsthetic function as a handsome grotesque places Mrs. Wigger, unconsciously, among the patrons of art.

Mr. Wigger is an ice man. He employs Harvey (before mentioned) to drive one of his wagons. Mr. Kay says, however, that he got swindled on the business when he bought it (Mr. Kay knows what he paid); that he is incompetent and has got his books all into a terrible tangle since; that, in addition, Mr. Wigger is "crooked" in the matter of charging his customers for more ice than he gives them; and, finally, that the business is going to pot.

The rest of Mrs. Wigger's guests may be likened to the "soldiers, townspeople, and others" who bring up the "full strength of the company" at the play. A couple of young women studying music in the Metropolis are here. They give a pleasant touch of color to the scene, but play no heavy character parts. Their education, however, adds two pianos to the house. The Colo-

nel's wife's pupils have another. Then there is a well set up, German-looking gentleman, third floor hall room front, who eats out, but has occasionally been seen in the halls, generally with a water pitcher. He has considerably the appearance of a "professor," and often may be heard playing a horn in his chamber late at night.

XVI

AS TO VISITS

IN stones?
In visits sermons are!

Up from the leaning picket fence a gravel path climbs the bulge: an attractive slope, with here a bush, there a tree, and, somewhat to one side, a big flower garden. Vines drip from the porch roof. The old door beneath, of the ancient divided pattern, stands open above the middle; and through the great hall, quite through the house, open also at its far door, comes the glowing afternoon sunlight, and a fresh breeze. And a bright, framed glimpse is given of the countryside at the back.

The lower section of door was unlatched, like a gate, on the inside by the travelers without. In the clear hall a grandfather's clock stands against the wall. The big, cool apartment through which the travelers pass is empty. A great fire-place, tall, broad, well-smoked within, cold, occupies the

one solid wall. Perhaps the first general impression of the room is that the numerous dark prints pinned seemingly at haphazard anywhere on the pleasing, green calcimined walls are of the old masters. This is sufficiently unusual as to strike considerably upon the visitor. And a glimpse is caught of shelves in two corners, and very worn looking volumes; which like the garments of Mrs. Gamp, hanging upon their nail, seem by much wearing to have become filled with a human character.

A square, low-ceilinged dining-room is next entered. Odd it is with windowed, light little recesses and alcoves. Here seated at a long, polished, heavy table, and in a simple, old-fashioned chair, is a little man not so young as once he was, clothed, from the top of his low collar to the soles of his low shoes, all in white. (An old gentleman clothed thus all in white gives one a delightful impression.) He is playing solitaire beside a big briar pipe. Instantly desisting, he gets cheerily upon his legs and begins at once to give the travelers welcome in a running stream of talk.

Now in a dinner the flavor of your entire meal is at the last in the power of your demi-tasse.

When the accomplished epicure orders you a dinner it is a thing of perfectly symmetrical art. The laws of the drama do not command more nicety of balance. The last finishing touch completes the whole; it is the denouement. So it is with going a journey—a journey is a dinner, the mind is a stomach—it falls to your host, when you arrive, to be the last consummate touch. Here your every minute nerve, fatigued yet still high-tingling, is quick. The person who comes before you now must, metaphorically, dance upon a tight, high-wire. The slightest slip and he falls heavily upon you. To be slow, to be dull (both very fine things in their place), to be bungling, to be too forward—this will not do.

Mr. Eben's talk is pitched very well. It does not let you down with a plump, but meets your spirit of exhilaration. It does not throw a burden on you to carry (this is not a time to talk solemnity, a grand thing in its time), but by sprightliness it stimulates you after your exertions. It does not work you but plays with you, and, while it diverts you, lets you rest.

A great lubberly dog, evidently the family's property, bounds after one of its kind going by, heedless of Mr. Eben's admonitory whistle. He

admiringly remarks, in his felicitous conversational manner, his whimsical expression beaming with regard for the ugly beast: "There is one thing about that dog, and that is his ready obedience." Irony so maliceless surely has seldom welled forth from a human heart.

Mr. Eben's talk is, for the most part, you observe as he goes on, a bright flow of this absolutely stingless irony. His nimbleness is in the method of insinuation, which is of course the most dextrous excellence in communication.

While the clever old gentleman is speaking, in comes a kind of entirely feminine Mr. Eben. Mrs. Eben's effect is entirely refreshing; for the reason, one thinks, that at present the vocation for which such unusual aptitude speaks in her modest person is a bit, or perhaps a great deal, out of fashion. She excells as a housewife and the mother of a family. Mrs. Eben explains that her scattered brood will appear later; and her gift manifests itself immediately: two travelers are regaled with tankards of milk.

The cheerful dining-room where this handsome couple (neither is handsome in the physical sense) greet their visitors, has a very great deal of character. And for this reason one who journeyed

there would have the world to come quietly and look into it.

Some who do not yet know it (they are legion) might awaken to this: that a room is an instrument of expression of personal temperament—expression, it may be, unconscious, when it is more likely than not to be an informer against its owner; or, as in this case, conscious and controlled by a highly educated taste; when its eloquence and melody are surprising. This apartment of the Ebens' continues the scheme of the main hall, which (it later develops) is one with the whole house. It is interesting to observe here (though perhaps indecent to point out) that it is by the distinguished character of the whole effect that some of the upholstery is saved, assessed simply as single pieces of furniture, from the appearance of almost shabbiness.

The low ceiling, the quaint oddities of construction in building, the old-fashioned woodwork, and original details such as the primitive, hammered iron door-latch, make ground for a good beginning in expression. The rough floor is uncovered, dark, oiled. The cool, green, painted woodwork, a tone darker than the simple walls, divides the walls into pleasant shapes. And these large

shapes are again separated into other interesting shapes by the dark prints of masterpieces of painting, which, often appearing as if torn from a page, and, mounted upon pieces of rough paper, are stuck in the most ingenious spots, with the carelessness in effect of the most sure and meditated art.

Upon examination, it is evident that a real mind, either that of some individual member of the family, or that of the family harmonious as one, has been behind the selection of these pictures. What, too, are evidently original drawings in pastel, portraits of beautiful children in their beautiful modern clothes, and wholesome landscapes full of the modern feeling of sunlight in painting, are scattered about among the prints. (And, a visitor learns, one of the Misses Eben is sometimes referred to as an "artist," which appellation arises from her having had some intelligent direction in the matter of "art.") However, the collection of pictures decorating the walls impresses one very decidedly as the voicing of a disciplined and robust taste.

Whoso hath pictures in his home, let him look them over! Have they not mostly been got together without thought, or ignorantly? Is there

not one shoddy picture among them? One nauseous? One contemptible? One, that to all that see, holds its owner up to derision?

Well, here in the house of Eben, an earthen pot, like a beautiful flower crock growing painter's brushes; an antique, blue, pictured plate (cracked); a tea-pot, its fellow, and a platter; a brass, antique candle-stick (lacking polish); among other such things appear to have been left in forgetfulness years ago upon the mantelpiece, upon the bookshelves, and upon the sideboard, a grand old chest of drawers.

The furniture is what is called antique Colonial, and, wherein it differs somewhat in appearance from much of this furniture which has been polished up for the present craze (though a very sensible craze to put it so, paradoxically, it is), it looks immensely at home here and most comfortable in its mind.

Well, well, Mr. Eben gets his stick to show one of his guests over "the farm." Mr. Eben is, by the way, very much interested in vegetable culture, and gets every once in a while a pamphlet from the government concerning this matter. The progeny begin to arrive.

Henry is a sturdy young animal, and a humor-

ous one, who just now divides his time between civilized husbandry of the soil under the direction of his male parent, and experimental study of the wild life of Indians, under the tutelage of a gentleman resident in the neighborhood much learned in this matter and who conducts during certain months of the year a sort of reservation and happy hunting ground for such as Henry. Knowledge derived from this later study will, no doubt, be of great use to Henry in after life, though it sometimes seems, at least to Mr. Eben, that one's steeping oneself in the habits and ideals of barbarians interferes a bit with one's present usefulness.

Be that as it may, one who visited the Ebens will not describe the charms of young womanhood. Whoso hath eyes, let him see! The Misses Eben assemble, that is all but one. Where is she? She is skulking behind doors. She cannot get out of coming in at last. She is visibly distressed. She has, it seems, mislaid her nose-glasses; and these spectacles make her, so she says, look like "a fright." She "hates to have" one who comes visiting "see her in these things." Dear Miss E., were one who went a journey king, just

such frights would be distinguished by the royal favor.

Ah! An event approaches that requires the attention of housewives, namely dinner. Were one who went a-visiting king and able to pass his time sitting in his counting-house counting up his money, he would choose a Queen of Hearts who could make some tarts, as well as help spend the money.

Now one who was left to himself was in the society of those best worth knowing of the human race.

If birds of a feather flock together, if a man may be known by the company he keeps, if anything represents an individual or a house it is his or its books. A man's deeds, even, do not speak himself; they are subject to the infirmities of opportunity, of chance, of mistake, of his capacity, of adversity, of misconstruction in the minds of others; his company may not at all represent him, by circumstance he may be denied that he would choose; but he reads what he likes. By his books you may know him!

Any volume on these shelves before this guest is one that, had an astute man knowingly but another week before him in this world, which he

would husband well, he might pick at random to read before he would go. He would extend his life as much as possible in one week.

Friend, is not what you have left to you of life but a kind of a week, more or less? You may have, to give you good measure, say, twenty-five years. If you should begin to-night and be able to read straight on, doing nothing else, in that pitiful time how many books could you read? How many that would a kingdom to you be must you leave unread? Before, then, all the wealth of this world is, as if by some juggler's trick, snatched from you, be the astute one who has but another week in which to turn over this world's treasures. Do not sit like one simple eating peanuts at the great fair. It will soon be night, when you must go home. Take with you, dear child, in your spirit the best of the big show.

Even so.

One who went a-visiting had never read "The Virginians." Death might have taken him thus!

A late lark twittered from the quiet skies, where the sun, his day's work ended, lingered as in content. There fell an influence luminous and serene, a shining peace. The smoke ascended in a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires shone out

and were changed. In the valley shadows rose. The lark sang on. The sun, closing his benediction, sank. On Mr. Eben's porch, one who went visiting sat enrapt in the spell of a great heart and by the flavor of an English style.

To-day it is said the old novelists are old-fashioned. Thackeray is old-fashioned. But here is where we fail; here is where writing, with, at its best, all its undoubted advance in development since past times; its increase in subtlety, its advantage by the progress of science, its realism, its psychology, impressionism, has not the power of old: A warm heart is old-fashioned. We have to-day, in the hands of some, a finer literary art than ever was before, a refined instrument; but we need again a great heart to play again a great tune. This was the secret of the past masters. In brave Harry Fielding, in sweet Oliver Goldsmith, in "Saint Charles," surnamed Lamb, in the good Sir Walter, in Dickens, and in Thackeray, was "an art that nature makes," an infinite tenderness, fidelity, bigness, warmness, deepness of noble heart. In one R. L. S., not so long since, was a heart something more than a pea. Again will come one writing, sent by Heaven. And think not this, (there is much prating by many

to-day against "fine writing"), think not this, that he will come without a great style. From the First Book of Moses, called Genesis, it has not been so. When the dire stress of human events demanded that a Voice speak through a Second Inaugural address, this could best be done in a splendid literary style. A great heart cannot be poured through a penny tin whistle.

With a tapping of sticks and sound of voices approach through the gloaming master and guest. Just in time, for all are summoned directly into the soft yellow glow of the lamp-lit room: to the hour of all the twenty-four when amenity, if ever, should preside entirely as Muse.

Mr. Eben, by the priority of age, goes before, stepping high over the perfectly flat door-sill, and at the same time lifting high his stick over it. For some reason or other, when a man slight in stature reaches Mr. Eben's age he always crosses a door-sill in this manner. Mr. Eben goes in talking merrily. He would be old-fashioned, if in nothing else, by his oath, which is "By the Lord Harry!"—this exclamation the student may find used as local color in the comedies of Mr. Congreve. But that method of crossing the door-sill has gone through one like a knife; it vividly

presents to the mind a fact one would rather not think of just now, and that is that before a great while Mr. Eben must cross a dark Threshold and be gone from us here. And it must strike one who can but yet know him only slightly that the passing of so pleasant a gentleman will be a great loss in the little world around him. Observation of Mr. Eben puts one in the humor to say that, perhaps after all, pleasantness is the first virtue.

The bright faces collected around Mr. Eben's table shine out near in the lamplight against the dark firmament of the dim room beyond, like so many suns. Lamplight draws people together; it is the light of fraternity; it touches elemental, primitive instincts; we "gather round" a lamp in spirit as well as in fact; in sensation we are huddled together out of the darkness, as about a camp-fire; we have the feeling of the value of human society. Then, lamplight makes a fine painting of a room; all that is subordinate is lost in vagueness; interest is centered, and we have portraits.

Mr. Eben's mental light burns as brightly as the lamp; his agile, running talk is the background upon which anybody else may place a bon mot who has one, or an observation. But he

(anybody else, that is) is relieved the unhappiness of feeling that one from him is needed when he has none, a situation which does not seem to attack Mr. Eben, nor, would one say, is it chronic anywhere in his family.

"I sat there, don't you know," said Mr. Eben (to pick up the flowing skein for an instant), "among all the other patients awaiting their turns," said Mr. Eben, "a long row of them all around the room; and I speculated, don't you know, about what each of them had; that is, don't you know, what it was, if he had it, that he had."

XVII

A HIGHWAY OF QUAINT MEMORIES

HUNDREDS of people in New York would be hard put to it to find Greenwich Avenue. Of that now rather out of the general way part of the city called by inhabitants fond of it "Old Greenwich Village" it is a main thoroughfare. It is but a few blocks long and runs neither exactly up and down nor crosstown, but like many of its neighbors, planted as cowpaths, lanes and alleys long before the city plan, it is somewhat eccentric in its going. If, to waver for a second, you are a stranger in its neighborhood, you may become exceedingly confused by observing on the lamp-post signs that you stand, for instance, at the corner of Fourth and Eleventh Streets. Fourth Street runs for a while east and west and then turns to go north and south.

This avenue, in its youth, that was in the eighteenth century, left the Post road, the Bowery of this age, at the present Astor place, near our

Cooper Union, came across past the Potter's Field, the Washington Square of to-day, and was known as the road to Greenwich. The old village of Greenwich, charming it must have been in its prime, still in spite of a new, generally shoddy apartment house here and there, surprisingly resists dissolution. Though shabby had become its estate generally, now and then a shining old white door or maybe a fine dull black one, an ancient polished brass knocker, a carefully preserved, tall, hammered iron newel, as these old grill posts beside the doorstep are called, a restored fanlight, a bright new red front with door and windows pieced out in white to the old brick three or two and a half stories with gable roof, dormer windowed, or an ivied wall, speaks a consciousness of character.

"Character, character is what it has!" we once read. Mr. Whistler would have liked it, we think; and has very nearly drawn bits of it, its rear view vistas and its more tumbledown aspect, in some of his etchings of Old Chelsea. Here, racy of this mellow soil, flourishes stuff for Shandian story.

Greenwich Avenue begins now at the west side of Jefferson Market. Perhaps you do not know

that Jefferson Market court is across Sixth Avenue from Kleinschmidt's, the restauranteur whose 30 cent steaks are so celebrated. All this is hard by the point of Christopher Street, which runs into Grove Street, which goes zigzag. Facing Grove Street Park, a tiny triangle, is the quaint studio house which was Robert Blum's. Behind Jefferson Market court is concealed the cul de sac Patchen place. Not far away is Pedro's illustrious table d'hôte, which is so popular that you have to wait there longer than Tommy Tucker sang for his supper.

Starting up Greenwich Avenue the wanderer may see above the prison wall, through the tall, narrow windows of the Moorish looking bastile, the guests behind the bars strolling about wrapped in blankets. Sauntering on, he may buy plaster casts, or savories at delicatessen shops, or have furniture repaired, or get his hair cut very economically, or have a horse shod, or select an undertaker, or rent a bicycle, or draw books at a free library, or see the famous dingy restaurant where all the old playbills are, and ever so many other things, until he comes to Jackson Square, where is the funny kink in Eighth Avenue at its beginning. In Jackson Park many

fine old "bums" are asleep. The "bums" of Old Greenwich Village have a rich quality, a pictorial and literary value beyond any of their brethren in America.

The visitor has passed on the way the old Monahan express building, which is subject to periodical conflagrations and has burned up oftener than anything else in New York. He has passed, too, very probably, the place where Kitty used to work. Alas, that she is there no more! Kitty was about four feet high; she was from London; was, as they say, cockney, and one of the most delightful of Phil May's drawings undrawn. A great many Londoners seem to settle in Greenwich Village, as in their natural home; many snuffy old gentlemen of a decidedly English cast, some with buff trousers, very round in the legs—but we have not sighed our sigh that Kitty left these shores.

"What has become of Kitty?" we inquired.

Mr. Nuggens, who was serving us our breakfast himself, explained: "Dot's husband (Dot was Kitty's sister) had a chance to go into the milk business in London." He further informed us that Kitty did not much like America.

Kitty's America! From 6 in the morning until

9 at night, Sundays and holidays included, she, who had found her place four days after she landed, had at brief moments looked out at this great and vast country as represented in a sordid bit of Greenwich Avenue.

Kitty will be interesting, no doubt, in the Old World for her impressions of a foreign land.

XVIII

HUMAN BEINGS

NOT long ago it came about that I was thrown for a time into the society of human beings. For a considerable period prior to this accident I had been living continuously in New York City. There, of course, one seldom or never sees man in his normal state. The inhabitants of Manhattan Island, we all know, are all, however much they may diverge in character one from another, extraordinary. When any born of woman become artists or great actors or colossal millionaires or abject paupers or mighty editors or peerless gunmen or, in short, anything decidedly out of the common, they become automatically, as it were, citizens of the metropolis, each abnormality given to his particular mania. There can be no blinking the fact that in New York City you are out of it, so far as kinship with the common heart of humanity is concerned. This fact strikes you with startling clearness

when, like myself, you go from the artificial air of the aberration-ridden city and sojourn for a space among natural men.

The natural, wholesome human being, then, as I have discovered him, is something like this. He is a curious creature. For one thing, Time causes him a great deal of trouble. He complains a great deal about having to go to work, and in his conversation looks forward continually to the week-end and other holidays. And yet when he is free from his employment he commonly is hard put to it to kill time until the hour when he proceeds to his business again.

Recently a young human being invited me to attend a periodical gathering at cards. He held forth to me as a lure to this entertainment the fact of his experience that three or four hours often went by in this society "without your knowing it." I know another male single human being that boards. To some extent he evades the ordeal of several holidays thrust together by withdrawing at these times to the seat of his people in another State. As he did not go away then, he "nearly died," as he put it, on the Fourth of July, and, to employ his own words, his "life was saved" by some friends inviting him in the afternoon to



take a ride in their car. He announced that he "dreaded" the next holiday. Notwithstanding this his face would steadily brighten as the week drew towards its close. Though he would look disconsolate enough on Sunday, particularly if it rained, and after he had read through his copy of the week's issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Sometimes on Sunday night he would save himself from a probable impending madness by going out and buying a copy of the *Evening Telegram* from New York. This evidently kept his mind on its throne until time to go to bed.

This human being began several weeks before hand to count the days until his vacation, which when it arrived he successfully got through by betaking himself to the gaity prevailing, presumably, in the bosom of his family. When, however, upon his return he learned that during the remainder of the summer the office would be closed all day Saturday, he nearly collapsed. I know a married female human being who, upon learning that her husband would not be home that evening, announced that she didn't know whether to "go to a picture show or go to see her aunt."

What human beings did for surcease from the consciousness of time before the movies were is a

profound mystery to me. The Victrola, too, is a godsend in this matter. I have seen a company of human beings successfully allay a perception of their existence for hours by industriously cranking up a Victrola. The dance is likewise employed. And the drug of spiritual lethargy provided by the motor car, fairly universal now, especially in its inexpensive form, among human beings, enables thousands to endure the brunt of life. The great point, apparently, among human beings is to avoid anything like human intercourse in which anything is communicated from one mind to another; and yet nothing is so trying to a human being as to be alone.

The manner in which human beings get themselves up is of particular interest to the student. The clothes of the male human being are always advertised as being in each case of a "distinctive" or "different" design. And yet upon the street male human beings are so identical one with another as to soft hat, round-lens spectacles, cut of coat and trousers, that it is decidedly difficult to distinguish them apart.

Human beings of the middle class apparently marry much earlier as a rule than New Yorkers of corresponding position. And the offspring

of human beings scarcely beyond adolescence is remarkable for a dweller of the metropolis to contemplate. There are a multitude of points as to human beings which are peculiar to themselves, but these few which I have briefly outlined are, perhaps, the most striking.

XIX

TO THE GLORY OF CITIES

IT is a very pleasant thing for one long in the country pent to escape to the city for a breath of fresh air. Indeed, it is a life-saver. When one thinks of the countless poor children scattered about the countryside without the means of obtaining even a day or so in New York during the blazing, suffocating summer one does not wonder that they die by the hundreds. Poor little things, when a single trip to town might save them! One would think that some of our millionaires with so much money to spend could take a few dozen country children into town during the hottest spell of the year so that they could fill their little lungs with the wholesome tonic air that blows across Manhattan Island and get some good nourishing appetizing food into their debilitated bodies. What worthier object of charity is there than this? What more patriotic act,

than thus to conserve the energies of the youthful nation?

Now I myself have been spending the summer in the country, and so I know something about the place. We, I and my unfortunate family, are about twenty-five miles from New York. I am a poor man, comparatively, and I haven't the means to go to town every day. My wife, too, is in delicate health, and I have sometimes feared that I might lose her before we can get moved back to the city. You see, she needs good air and a diet that will build her up. But we are in the country, and she gets weaker every day. I got her in, however, last Sunday, and we had a square meal at Childs' and she has been better ever since. During the brief time that we were in town I felt more like myself than I have all summer. Well, the summer's pretty near over now—only a few weeks more, and then I'll be a new man!

But at present we are, as I say, in the country. For the benefit of city-dwellers I'll describe the country. Over all is the pitiless heavens. A withering, stifling blanket of heat, saturated with moisture, lies over the endless land. There is never a breath of fresh air. (Except when there

is a thunder-storm—a thing which cannot be imagined by city-dwellers.) The perspiration pours from you, and there is nothing to take your mind off of the heat, nothing to look at but trees. Now and then you see some other lonely fellow mortal going slowly about, dragging his wretched bucolic life with him. Occasionally a party of happy motorists from the city whizzes by. Insects of more kinds than you ever heard of bite into your nerves until you could scream with frenzy. Dust grinds into every crevice of a body become loathsome to you. Your feet hurt like sin. You are suffering from the soul out. But what do asinine cows care for that! You come home to your monotonous country fare, never anything that is out of season locally. If you could only have something that you wanted to eat! If you could only be a boy again back on the avenue! That would make a man of you.

Then, as I say, we went into town last Sunday. As we entered the city's ragged edges my wilted heart lifted up. I saw human activity. I saw the noble hovels of my humbler brother men. I saw the poor and oppressed decked with toil, their lives made glad by the wine of human companionship. Then the surge and beat of the great city

took us. It poured through my veins, a life-giving tonic. I could have leaped from my seat and waved my hat. Aye! I was lusty. On the golden pavement my wife and I solemnly shook hands. Our immortal spirits, long atrophied, had returned to us.

A spanking breeze blew across the town, catching skirts awhirl. There was the sparkle and whir of wheels. Men, dapper men, moved jauntily. Women, ah! women, women rouged, bedizened, chic, audacious, decked out in all the fantasies of madding fashion, everywhere, delicious, ravishing, goading, stinging into the temper of steel the spirit of man. And then as I saw that symbol of man's might and beauty and power, a traffic policeman "conducting the orchestral Strand" (only this wasn't the Strand), my eyes filled with tears from emotion.

Through the windows of restaurants we saw persons, those chosen by the gods to dwell in cities, eating watermelon, and other of the earth's yield forbidden, until goodness knows when, in the country; and, dear and cherished urban brother, we went in.

XX

HOW MR. TILLEN WAS SAVED

SUNDAY morning found Miss Horniday's sister installed for a little visit in the house of her brother-in-law, Mr. Tillen, and the family at their Sunday breakfast. Mr. Tillen is a bright, delicate little man with a bushy little brown beard, which spreads over every part of his face but where it would seriously interfere with the performance of his duty. He wears little, glossy, very low, straight, stand-up collars, and a little suit of black clothes, very round in the trouser-legs. Little stub-toed "congress" shoes without polish complete his costume. Mr. Tillen speaks always in a cheerful little chirp. Mr. Tillen, in his pleasant little fashion, gave thanks for the food set before them, and asked a blessing for his family, then fell to spryly. But with Mr. Tillen the business of eating is not such a simple thing as may be supposed. Mrs. Tillen has a great deal to say concerning what Mr. Tillen may

eat and may not eat. Miss Horniday also has many decided opinions upon the subject. While this occasionally provokes considerable dispute between the two of them, it never obviously impairs Mr. Tillen's amenity. To the best of his ability, he obliges them both. After breakfast, the company withdrew to the parlor, where Mr. Tillen conducted a little Sabbath morning song service. In these exercises Miss Tillen, a precocious, though not a handsome, young lady of some fourteen years, was conspicuous at the piano. Mr. Tillen warbled a little accompaniment.

Directly after song service, Miss Horniday's sister got into trouble.

"Have you a Sunday paper? I should like to look it over," she said.

For a moment the entire family was aghast. Miss Horniday was the first to recover her power of speech.

"I am hardly surprised that you read Sunday papers," she said acridly. "No! we have not a Sunday paper. We have never had such a thing in the house, and never will have. Do you think we poison that child's mind?"—pointing to Miss Tillen, who immediately assumed an expression of horror—"with Sunday papers? Sunday pa-

pers are instruments of the devil!" cried Miss Horniday, concluding with some violence.

Mrs. Tillen said a great deal more, though rather more poignantly, to the same effect. Miss Horniday's sister replied in kind; the discussion was waxing hot and furious, and very likely would have terminated in the immediate departure of Miss Horniday's sister, had not Mr. Tillen just then been opportunely discovered by Miss Tillen to be out on the sidewalk without his hat, talking to a neighbor. Whereupon the warring parties ceased their discord and unanimously turned their attention to Mr. Tillen. He was instantly fetched in and given a sound scolding by all. Mr. Tillen cheerfully admitted the folly of a man of his frail constitution neglecting to wear a hat in the open air, and harmony reëntered the household.

Mr. Tillen is a Sunday-school superintendent, has been for twenty years, and is a pillar of the church. By this time it became necessary for him to get himself in readiness for attendance at Sunday-school. Included in this process, it is understood, is the operation of shaving. Just what Mr. Tillen shaves, however, is a mystery. It certainly cannot be his face.

The family toilet complete, Mr. Tillen and Miss Tillen departed on foot for Sunday school. In the course of the morning, the rest of the family followed after in the carriage for church.

At one o'clock Mr. Tillen assembled his family about the board. He piped a blessing of extra length for dinner and prepared to serve the food.

"I saw Brother Wallatt at service this morning," he remarked unwittingly.

"Did you speak with him?" asked Miss Horniday all alert.

"Only for a moment," Mr. Tillen replied.

"Did you inquire about his mother?" asked Miss Horniday.

Mr. Tillen coughed uneasily.

"No," he chirped. "No, I had hardly time to ask him anything."

"Mr. Tillen," said Miss Horniday austerely, "Mr. Tillen," she cried, "you have made them our enemies for life. Mrs. Wallatt has been at death's door for two weeks past."

"Oh, no! Dear me! No, not so bad as that," said Mr. Tillen cheerily. "He understands I had no time for anything. I just leaned through the crowd and told him that Miss Horniday's sister

had come to our house and invited him to call with his wife."

Mrs. Tillen laid down her knife and fork and slowly turned toward her lord. Mr. Tillen saw the storm approaching and cunningly attempted to avert it by a little pleasantry. But in vain.

"John," said his wife. "Don't you know this house is in no condition to receive callers? Don't you know that you have been sick here for months, that everything is upside down, that we have no girl, and I am wearing myself out with housework—without keeping the parlor in order for every Tom, Dick and Harry that my sister here may want to call on her?"

As this last was a back-handed jab at Miss Horniday's sister, that lady herself entered the fray. She was closely followed by Miss Horniday. Mr. Tillen defended himself as best he could, and heroically attempted to restore peace among his relations, with the consequence that he made matters only worse. The combatants wore themselves out at length, and dinner was finished in comparative silence.

The afternoon passed very quietly. Almost every one took him or herself to his or her room for a nap. The evening was spent in general dis-

course. The amazing remarkableness of Miss Tillen was an almost inexhaustible theme of conversation. Miss Horniday gave it as her opinion that Miss Tillen—"little Anna," is her family sobriquet, in defiance of her size—would surely be an evangelist. While Mrs. Tillen contended that she would undoubtedly become a great singer and convert erring souls by her gift of song. They both, however, agreed in expressing a fear that unless she were very carefully trained indeed, her genius might snap the bonds of righteousness and she bring everlasting disgrace upon her family and ancestry by embracing an histrionic career.

"It is astonishing, the spite held against that child," said Mrs. Tillen turning to Miss Horniday's sister, "by some of the persons in this town."

"At school," added Miss Horniday.

"At school," iterated Mrs. Tillen. "Would you believe it, the teacher gave every child in the class but 'little Anna' a piece to speak on Friday. I went straight to the school and straight to her teacher. I inquired why 'little Anna' had no piece to speak. 'Why has every child in this class a piece to speak, except Anna Tillen?' I said. 'Anna can't speak,' that woman said to me.

'Anna can speak, and she shall speak, or you'll hear more of this,' I said. 'John Tillen was born in this town, and his father was before him; he has lived here since he was a boy; he has been superintendent of the Sunday-school for twenty years, and has been in business here twice that long. He has some influence here with the School Board, I think.' It is fortunate for her that that teacher realized this. Little Anna had a piece to speak by Friday."

Mr. Tillen's deportment during this evening collocution was interesting. He sat in the background, very upright though silent, speaking only when spoken to, which was seldom. Frequently his eyes could be seen to close and his breathing became heavy. Then suddenly he would open his eyes with a little start and look so bright and cheerful that he was positively delightful.

The evening's gathering closed with a few forceful remarks upon life.

"Dancing is the ruin of society," said Mrs. Tillen.

Miss Horniday expressed an opinion that hotel life and apartment houses are murderers of the home life of this country.

It was decided that colleges are making moral

perverts of the youth of the land, that humanity is on the down grade, that the world in general is going straight to the devil, and that the end of the race is destruction.

When this optimistic conclusion had been satisfactorily reached, the company retired to their several chambers for the night.

During the night Mr. Tillen experienced another "attack," differing in its physical nature from that which he had encountered at dinner the day before, and on the morrow was too ill to present himself at his place of business. Mr. Tillen's condition grew worse as the day lengthened, and by the following nightfall the household was in a state of panic. Mrs. Tillen demonstrated beyond a doubt that Mr. Tillen's present attack was contingent upon the excitement occasioned by Miss Horniday's sisters's visit. This failed, however, to afford the sufferer any relief, and a physician was summoned. The physician pronounced the illness extremely serious. He packed the patient in ice, and did other things incomprehensible to the lay mind. He then explained that his patient would require such constant attention that the employment of a trained nurse was advisable. This occasioned consternation in the

family mind. Trained nurses were an unknown quantity, and were looked upon with suspicion by the family as a product of the wicked world raging without, and as enemies of domestic life. Such arguments were also set forth as that the house was in no condition to admit a stranger. Miss Horniday's sister proved herself a profligate by championing the cause of trained nurses, and then riot reigned supreme. The fear that Mr. Tillen might die, and that Evensville would arise as a man to proclaim his death due to lack of sufficient attention, at length so preyed upon Mrs. Tillen's mind that it was decided to employ a nurse. A young woman of that profession was recommended by the doctor. This young woman's charge for her services was considered so exorbitant that the family was convinced that she must be respectable.

The nurse was sent for and arrived. She proved to be a comely young person, apparently unstained by her contact with the world. The sickroom was with much reluctance given over to her custody, though she experienced considerable difficulty in maintaining authority there. Mrs. Tillen and Miss Horniday both were naturally indignant that a stranger, such a menial at that,

should presume to give them orders and attempt to restrict their going and coming at will in any part of their own house. A thing so preposterous wrought rebellion in their souls, and laid the egg of suspicion there also. "If a man's own wife is not to be by him at the time of his affliction, if she is to be displaced by a strange woman," Mrs. Tillen evidently thought, "something is wrong indeed." The nurse most stoutly contended that Mr. Tillen must be kept free from excitement, and needed absolute quiet above all else in the world. Mrs. Tillen and Miss Horniday frothed and fumed at the restraint laid upon them. Whenever this restraint became absolutely insufferable to them they either treated it with open defiance or endeavored to overcome it by stealthy cunning.

One dreadful day Mrs. Tillen slipped into the sick-room, and what she saw for one instant froze her virtuous blood with horror. All her secret suspicions were confirmed a thousandfold. The nurse, the brazen hussy, was seated close by the bed which contained the helpless Mr. Tillen. She had apparently just finished feeding him broth from a spoon. Now she was bending over him, and her warm hand was placed upon his brow. It

was resting there. Mrs. Tillen realized that this was no time for fainting; she nerved herself, and as soon as power returned to her she fled from the room to procure reinforcements. She met Miss Horniday upon the stairs.

"Mary! Mary Horniday!" she cried. "The nurse"—Miss Horniday turned pale—"the nurse is hypnotizing John Tillen!"

There was no need for more explaining. She turned, and the two women dashed to the rescue of John Tillen. They closed in upon the nurse and hustled her from the room, both talking at once, if it can be said that they were talking, and gesticulating with a perfect frenzy. Just as soon as their articulations could be made intelligible the nurse was informed that she was everlastingly discharged, and that hereafter she showed herself in the house of Tillen at her peril.

Mrs. Tillen and Miss Horniday sank into chairs.

XXI

REVISITED BY PICKENS

PICKENS is in great glee. Pickens has returned to New York—little old New York—upon a visit, after many years spent in another part of the world. What sport it will be for Pickens to visit that old boarding-house! Never were such times as those Pickens had in that old boarding-house. As he strides down the old familiar street, that he remembers to have trod such hundreds of times of old, and nimbly vaults up the steps, as was his wont when a bachelor student here, he forgets his family, and his rise in the world, and unconsciously searches his pocket for his key, until it flashes upon him like a sort of pain that he is not coming home. Then he recollects himself; he is not "Pick" at all; he is Dr. James Pickens, a man of family, with a bank account and a house and lawn of his own in a city farther west; a wife and children greet him at his door, and he is very proud of it all, and very

happy; but just now, standing on the cold, brown steps, with a fine rain beginning to fall, and the two long lines of lamps meeting in perspective down the street, the lamps lighting now one by one—it is evening—he feels a sorrow, sorrow for he knows not what; but he can't get in. He looks up at the number. Yes, it is the right house, so he pulls the bell. He remembers that he pulled that bell once long ago when he was very young, in the city for the first time, looking for a room, and not at all sorry, but very much afraid.

After a good while his ring is answered and a maid opens the door. It isn't Mary at all; it is a different maid, and Pickens thinks a very much smaller one. Pickens asks for Mrs. Tucker. Mrs. Tucker doesn't live here any more; the house has changed hands. Mr. Tucker is dead. Poor Uncle Billie is dead. Then Pickens asks to see the present landlady. He is ushered into the parlor, sits uncomfortably on the edge of a chair, and doesn't feel at all at home, as he imagined he would. While he is waiting, he hears the boarders come trooping down the stairs in companies of twos and three for dinner. He forgets himself again and rises to greet them heartily and surprise them all, but he soon sees that they



are not the boarders he knows, and they look, he thinks, remarkably strange. So he sits down again. The lady of the house comes in, but she isn't very friendly; she tells him that she has no room vacant at present, and wonders, apparently, what he wants by so persistently remaining. Pickens becomes quite timid, but eventually asks permission to eat his dinner here. He is allowed to go down into the dining-room and is immensely pleased to find that he is to sit near his old chair. Every one at the table is laughing or talking. No one knows Pickens, and the room and everything in it does not look quite so splendid as he remembers it—in fact, Pickens thinks it looks pretty shabby. Pickens begins to wish that he had dined at a hotel.

But, as he studies the boarders, Pickens sees that though as individuals they are personally unknown to him, as characters they are not at all unfamiliar. Here, first of course, is the life and soul. What company has not its life and soul? As he gazes at the little man at the head of the table—the life and soul is often, oh, very often, a little man—Pickens thinks of old Ben Nut. As this little man leans far over the table and conversation all along the line is hushed while he illus-

trates his story by means of a butter-dish and salt-cellar, and upon its completion throws himself back in his chair to lead the laugh that follows, Pickens thinks this fellow isn't shucks of a life and soul compared to Ben Nut.

Ben Nut could talk authoritatively upon any subject whatever. The less he knew about a subject the better; knowledge of the thing sort of hampered Ben Nut. He was always ready to back up his statements by extravagant bets. Whenever he made a remark he would throw back his head and look one straight in the eye, as much as to say he defied one to challenge it. Ben Nut had travelled; in fact, he had been almost everywhere, or some member of his family had. No one remembers to have ever heard a prominent man mentioned in his presence that Ben Nut had not been introduced to, introduced to him on board that man's private yacht; or, perhaps, his brother had been. Ben's brother was even a greater man than was Ben himself. Ben's brother was the most remarkable one of his most remarkable family—unless, perhaps, it was his sister. Ben Nut's father owned the fastest horse in the world; competent judges had declared so time and again. Ben had driven behind that

horse to defeat the best blood on the Speedway; and that horse had never failed to do it when she had the right man behind her. It required a wonderful man to manage that horse. If the conversation turned to dogs, Ben Nut had owned the most intelligent dog that ever was seen. Ben Nut had studied at a great number of professions, and had been told by leading men in every one of them that he would have been bound to make a great success in each if he had only stuck at it. Ben Nut was a famous lady-killer. What life and soul is not? He had a large collection of photographs which represented a long line of past admirers, "has beens," as it were. Like Mr. Saint Ives, when he couldn't please a woman, hang him in his cravat.

But with all his being such a life and soul, Ben Nut was a fine fellow, generous and manly, and, believing all these things himself, he was sincere, and one of the best of friends Pickens ever had; and Pickens longed to grasp him again by the hand.

Then, in strong contrast to Ben Nut was the solitary man, Mr. Gingam. A new solitary man is here now. Mr. Gingam lived across the street in a little hall bedroom all to himself and only

took his meals here. Mr. Gingam rarely spoke to any one and was never known to smile. He was employed downtown, no one knew just where. He was very pale and very thin, not at all well-looking. He didn't seem to get the proper enjoyment out of life. He ate his meals sadly. In the evening Mr. Gingam would walk quietly down to the cigar store at the corner, Mr. Hine's, and make purchase of a five-cent cigar, never more than one; and then he could be seen afterward sitting silently at the window of his room smoking it and reading the newspaper. Mr. Gingam was greatly interested in newspapers, and always carried about a great bundle of them in the side pocket of his coat. He would read them between courses at the table. He never commented upon their contents; whatever intelligence he gained from them he kept to himself. Newspapers were the only friends he had, and when he had finished reading them in the evening and his cigar had gone out, he would turn out his light, and, we are left to suppose, went to bed. Then the day was done for Mr. Gingam; his work, whatever it was, his silently eaten meals, his one five-cent cigar, and his only companion the newspaper, were finished until the

morrow. No one knew whether he ever dreamed or not, nor could any one imagine what about, if he did. Pickens and I are agreed in thinking that he did not sleep soundly, but tossed about in bed and awoke in the morning unrefreshed and unrested to begin another day exactly like all that had gone before.

Then there was Bynam. Bynam had his troubles, too, but he always told of them. He never came down in the morning but he had been kept awake all the preceding night by cats howling on the back fence, or been wakened about three in the morning by the noise of a gang of drunken hoodlums fighting in front. The weather was always vile for Bynam; he had never before seen such rain, or known such hot weather. Bynam was a sufferer from every disease known to man. He was a terrible worker, too, and often told of his working on till two o'clock in the morning; he rarely stopped before eleven or twelve at night.

There too was the doctor. The doctor was a considerable man in the house, something of an advertisement, and the star boarder. Most of the table was composed of students, and they had to be down at eight in the morning or miss their

breakfast; but the doctor came down at his own convenience. He had lived here ten years or more, had his plate out in front, and occupied several rooms on the first floor. The doctor was a bachelor, but one day he fell in love. He did not say that he was in love, but the fact was obvious. He very suddenly developed a taste for light literature, and as suddenly became distinguished for the beautiful and extravagant phrases of speech it mysteriously became his wont to utter. Whenever a man speaks of a place as looking like a "fairy land dotted with myriads of bewitching lights," he is either in love or intoxicated. And the doctor never drank.

Pickens is suddenly awakened from his reverie by the pushing back of many chairs, and the noise of the company leaving the room. Dinner is over. Pickens leaves the house and walks down to buy a cigar from Mr. Hine, who is still there, one remaining landmark of Dr. James Pickens's student days. Mr. Hine still refers to the students as "studiums" and still sapiently speaks of their diplomas as "deplumes."

XXII

RIDING ON CARS

A GREAT many people nowadays "go in" for motor cars. But very few, I fancy, go in for riding on just cars, public cars; I mean common carriers. Riding on cars apparently is generally regarded as compulsory, like education when one is young, and making a living when one has a family. Frequently this, riding on cars, seems to be held at best as merely an opportunity to read the newspaper. Newspapers, of course, are admirable things, even indispensable, and in many of their parts highly entertaining. But they can have only an academic interest when riding on cars.

Some people even read books and magazines while on cars, which is still more incomprehensible; as tales and philosophies, psychologies and sermons are merely reflections of the phenomena everywhere on cars. Some persons, again, chew gum on cars. This also is a mistake. One should

give one's entire mind to the matter of riding on cars, and so live to the full every second of this fine time.

Nothing, indeed, is more exasperating than to be *prevented* from sharing in entertainment provided by riding on cars. You will instantly recognize what I have in mind. Your view of the side of the car on which you sit is obstructed by bulky persons seated at your elbow. By the patent delight of all across the way from you you are aware that something highly diverting is occurring down the line on your side of the car, something which you cannot see. It may be the humorous spectacle of a drunken man, or it may be the antics of a baby. At any rate, the situation is maddening. One thing here usually can be done; you can arise and give your seat to some lady standing. As a matter of fact, it is always better to stand on cars anyway, so that you will miss nothing that goes on, and can see equally well both sides of the car.

Now, a remarkable thing about the cars of a great city is that they are always full of people. When you return home some night unusually late, long after your customary bed-hour, well on

into the morning, in fact, you find great numbers of people still merrily going about on cars quite as usual, altogether unconscious, apparently, of the flight of time or of the existence of such things as bed-hours. People, people, people are always on cars, countless people. And yet, in a great city, every time you enter a car you see, do you not? a totally new lot of people. How rarely do you find one among them that you know, or even ever have seen before. And while you and I shall grow old, and get on and off cars with difficulty, most of the people on cars remain forever young. And whereas you and I are often sad, most of the people on cars are, it is clear, forever happy. So it is that it is good to ride on cars, for happiness is contagious, and one is roused out of oneself on cars and breathes in the cheerfulness of others. Thus, too, will hosts of people, forever young, forever happy, continue to ride on cars, long after your last car-ride and mine, world without end, or at least until cars are no more. It is a wholesome thought.

If one had no watch one could tell the time of day very nicely by riding on cars. An eerie time to ride on cars is shortly after five o'clock in the

morning. At this hour a curious phenomenon is present there. It is the hour when the wounded are coming and going on cars. Where or how they were wounded, and whence they came and whither they go, is to me enveloped in the atmosphere of the awesome mystery of this early hour; but, nevertheless. it is true that at about the break of dawn numerous strange-looking beings with bandaged heads or their arms in slings are to be seen on cars. This also, of course, is the hour when the dinner-pail, the pick and shovel travel on cars, the hour when Millet would have painted the subway. It is the hour, too, when the budding O. Henry should be abroad, for then are to be seen, huddled in the corners of cars, poignant Romance, the plain and humble flowers of stern toil. What human story rides there, where she sits, whose jacket sleeves and mittens do not meet, whose shoes are split, whose lips and nose are blue? Where is her home, and where would her bed of love be? Also on cars at this hour one occasionally finds the belated reveller, whose white shirt-front and top-hat look abashed by the ripening dawn.

Follows upon this hour a period more or less

celebrated and known as "during the rush hour." And this, as every one is aware, is one of the most exhilarating times of the day. It is the great hippodrome of the matter of riding on cars. Doubtless hardly a spectacle of our modern civilization would more amaze our fathers aforetime than the 8:30 A. M. subway express. "During the rush hour" many of us take our only physical exercise of the day. We clatter down the steps of the station and rush to a door of the incoming train. The door rolls open and a number of persons who had been pressed against it are dashed backward by determined debouching passengers. Then we throw ourselves against the mass of humanity in the doorway; a giant guard places a broad hand on each of our shoulder-blades, and gives an eight horse-power shove, so that the door, rolling back, with a struggle just clears us; and we attempt to squirm our arms sufficiently free to hold our paper before us. Round and about us are every known species of the great middle class.

Following this come those of a superior caste, gentlemen with sticks who keep "bankers' hours," and then ladies bound upon shopping, and later to the matinée. And so on round the clock.



Those of lofty position early home, and then the rush hour again. And after a slight lull the theatre crowds. But always people, people, people with their funnv faces, funny clothes, and funny ways.

XXIII

FOLKS THAT RILE US

NOW we are not easily, and never unjustly, "riled." We are, we believe, as fair-minded and tolerant a person as there is. But a few things there are that drive us almost mad. You will agree with us, we think, that these are things beyond the reach of human charity. We pause to choke back our choler at the recollection of them. Now, when we, a bit late to our office, are attempting to get out of a local subway train and to catch the express about to move out on the opposite track, and a low-brow character pauses in the doorway before us while he thrusts forth his head to ascertain the station at which he has arrived, we come near to having delirious hydrophobia. Is it not so with you? Quite as we had thought. Won't you have a cigarette? You are the broad-minded, philosophic sort of person to whom we like to talk.

We agree with you entirely in the matter of

that other type of animal which has an idea that he is the only person intending to leave the train at this stop. As the crowded train nears the station we face toward the door, and, naturally, like the gentleman that we are, prepare to lock-step out in our order. Then it is, as the train stops, that this creature grabs us by the shoulder and hurls us backward behind him into the car. Our dear sir, your sentiments do you great credit. We often have said the very same thing ourselves —when the righteous passions of noble men are what they are, how is it that never is this being killed?

You are an intelligent man—have another cigarette—you realize that on the island of Manhattan are several millions of people. You bear this in mind as you move about. Certainly. You remember that it has been explained that the reason a drawing of an artist's model in the pose of walking is unlifelike is because he has not the consciousness men who are actually walking on the street have of their relation to other moving objects about them. So. Well, you know what we are about to say. Sure pop! They ought to be hung, all of them; those dolts who go about

the streets of New York obviously under the impression that they are alone upon a desert isle. They pause to gape at something, and stand immovable in the line of the pedestrian procession. Surprised they are when you bang into them. Good for you. Well, you send for us and we will go on your bond.

Selfishness is the root of all contemptibleness, ain't it? When we have been standing in a crowded train and hoping that some one seated would get out at the next station, we have seen a low and boorish creature snatch before our very eyes a seat vacated when the train stopped. You should see the look of loathing we give a reptile such as this. But such natures are callous to any finer feeling; heavens! they don't care what any one thinks of them. Usually, too, they are very ugly to look at. Yes, and we have seen a man squeezed in somewhere along the line of seated passengers move over and make himself comfortable while we remained standing, when the person next to him arose. Small boys who continually lug about enormous boxes for the purpose of blocking up the passageway in subway trains doubtless you have found exceedingly offensive.

And don't those people who always are deter-

mined to take their time about everything infuriate you? Before you they stand at the ticket window and count their change three times over. How insolent is their deliberation. Every line of their bodies declares that they will not budge until they are quite sure that they have their right change.

Must you be going? Well, we are glad we met you. Call us up some time and have lunch with us. We say, you know that type that is not going to be hurried one bit from his table in a crowded restaurant because others are waiting. Not he. You have been watching every mouthful that he has taken for some time; you observe that he has come to coffee, and you edge over his way in order to be ahead of some other bloomin' fool when he goes. His companion, a very decent sort, you have an intuitive impression has reminded him that you are waiting. Then it is that you see arrogance. He stretches his legs out before him and lights a cigar. He is showing his infernal firmness.

Well, so long.

XXIV

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

A YOUNG man the other day went to see his washerwoman. John Marmaduke Tippins had been aware for some time of a curious metaphysical change occurring in the world about him, at first vaguely felt in his nervous organism, then gradually becoming more and more defined to his mind. Mrs. Wagger's juvenile daughter admitted Tippins to the family parlor; leaving the room to call her mother, she cried: "There's a man here to see you." "Tip" (it was so he was known to his cronies) felt there was something queer about the sound of this. It had a strange tone. There was, to his ears, something oddly cold, unfamiliar about it. But he could not fasten on to the explanation. Mrs. Wagger entering directly, the incident passed, for the moment, from his thoughts; still it left somewhere in the back of his head a faint, dumb feeling of uneasiness, as when for several days you

know that there is something you can't remember. This was not, now that this inquiry into the phenomena of Tippins gets the chronology of events more into line, exactly the other day either, but some little time ago. The other day in a store a young saleswoman very much occupied, observing "Tip" standing about unattended to, called to another: "Will you wait on this man?" Tippins recognized instantly a distasteful effect produced in him by these words; though he could not at the instant recollect under just what circumstances he had experienced this unpleasant sensation before. This impotency haunted him. Then he remembered the washerwoman's child. It occurred to him that perhaps this (as he began to feel it to be) sinister attitude toward him had been many times present more or less recently when he had not as consciously perceived it. It had been, he suspected, increasingly present of late.

Tippins became uncomfortable in his soul. He felt that coolish shadows were settling about his path. A pleasant, caressing warmth, like open, friendly sunlight, which he had always known, grown so accustomed to that he had not ques-

tioned but it was a permanent condition of his existence, he felt was unaccountably, uncontrollably withdrawing from him. Why did not people's hearts go out to him as of yore? What was the cause of this hardening everywhere? It was weird. What had he done? Was not he the same old "Tip"? "Here's to old John Tippins!" into his mind ran the refrain of his college fraternity song. Then intellectually he comprehended. The matter was in the word "man."

It struck on him, as he perceived its significance in regard to himself, with a booming sound. It was flat-footed, bare-faced somehow, that word, as applied to him. There was no affability in it. It was imperious. It was like a summons to the bar of justice; it was as if a clerk of the court, calling him by name, cried: "J. M. Tippins to the bar." To explain, "He had just," says the novelist of Farmer Oak, in "Far from the Madding Crowd," "reached the time of life at which 'young' is ceasing to be the prefix of 'man' in speaking of one."

Of Tippins was it even so?

"Young man, young man!" Why, he was a young man! He had been this all his life—everybody had called him so—how could he cease to

be a young man? This was horrible. Yet he could not blink the fact that something was gone. Why did Katie observe him so coldly? How could she be so? She was unnatural, that maid-servant. It had been Tippins' experience that maid-servants were always interested in young men. Mary, Annie, Marie, Dolly (Dolly was very pretty), Delia—Dear Delia! tall and raw-boned, red-haired and Irish, she perhaps above all had taken a fine pride in him. He was always a "young gentleman" to Delia. Tippins saw her then, in the eye of his memory, pause at her dusting; there was a beaming brightness in her eye (a brightness he had found in more beautiful eyes than Delia's) as she observed a toilet she regarded obviously with touching approval; and she accused him, with keen relish, of being off directly to the company of some "young sweetheart." Delia entertained the idea constantly that he moved to and fro and had his being almost entirely in the society of "young sweethearts." It came over Tippins that not recently had his goings and comings struck any one in this manner. It was a painful idea to have to face, but he did not now seem to excite in the minds of his environment any suspicion of

"young sweethearts." Probably, Tippins' reflections led on, people considered that by this time he should have got himself a wife. Tippins recollected, in that odd way in which things shoot without any context out of the past, when a young lady had laughed at him quite heartily for referring to himself as "a bachelor." "You had better wait," she had said, "until you're a little older." Well, he was a bachelor right enough now, he supposed. How long do you suppose, he mused, before he would be spoken of in the phrase "an old bachelor"?

"Do not," Tippins said to his barber, "take too much off the top." He meant he did not wish to have his pate shaven like a convict. The barber was a pleasant fellow. "Especially," he replied, running his fingers through Tippins' forelocks, "especially on top." This retort struck him as very jocose. He seemed to think that between them, his customer and himself, they had cracked a merry jest. It gave Tippins, as the saying is, a "start." Of course, he had been aware for some time that his hair—well, awhile back a young woman relative of his, referring to the subject, had remarked to him,

"Isn't your forehead becoming considerably higher than it was?" But to an intellectual man that way of putting it was not somehow so disturbing. This croaking barber!—Tip longed for him to be done so that (Tip has his glasses off until then) he could with more attention observe his head again in the mirror.

Does moral disintegration, John Marmaduke Tippins revolved the question in his mind, follow upon the heels of physical disillusion? He could not explain to himself why, but the other day he had told a man—he had meant to say he was thirty years of age—he had told him he was in his thirtieth year. And mental decay, was that close at hand?

XXV

ON GETTING SOMETHING PUBLISHED, ETC.

WHAT effect will Prohibition have on the publishing of new editions of the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam"? Our wags and jesters in the press have for some time been treating facetiously the idea of, so to say, literature under the lid. Here, however is a perfectly ponderable thought. If this coming Christmas sees not five or six new editions of "Omar," this will be (in the book trade) a thing as epochal, without parallel, as Prohibition itself. As, however, the manufacture and sale of volumes of the Omarian quatrains is not mentioned in President Wilson's War Measure or in the eighteenth Constitutional Amendment, it is not easy to say that they will not be on tap in their usual quantity.

Indeed, there is something altogether mysterious about this Omar business. There is not, I believe, available a complete bibliography of the editions of "Omar Khayyam." Thomas B.

BROOME STREET STRAWS

Mosher used to keep one brought down to date for inclusion as a feature in an edition of his own. But some nine years ago this feature had attained to such length that it threatened to swamp the boat, so to put it, and was abandoned. Mr. Tompkins, you know Mr. Tompkins, bookseller, tall, bald, pale. . . . However, no matter. Mr. Tompkins regards it as a modest computation that there are some one hundred and fifty distinct editions now before the American public.

The copy of one of these editions which I hold in my hand (a superior edition on Van Gelder paper) is of the tenth printing. This little volume is printed in unassailable taste. It is bound in three-quarter crushed levant morocco. Copies of "Omar" have doubtless been bound in every material that ever enclosed a book, and some (I have seen) have been bound in substances which, I fancy, no one before ever thought of putting on a book. In size there is (so far as I know) no elephant-folio "Omar"; but it is a perfectly safe bet that there are "Omars" of every other size. Narrow perpendicular oblong, narrow horizontal oblong, square—in any shape in which a book is made there is an "Omar." Schools of illustration have arisen, and flourished, and illustrated

"Omar," and passed away—gone by the board to such an extent than even to allude to them brings a happy smile of derision at their ideas and methods. And other schools of illustration have arisen, quick with the new day—and have illustrated "Omar." Think of Elihu Vedder and think of Frank Brangwyn!

I knew a man (he was called "the vice-chancellor") who made a hobby of collecting "Omars" —why, heaven only knows! He was esteemed a just judge, and he was a charming gentleman who lived on intimate terms with much literature. He warned the bookseller (of whom I have just spoken) to let no "Omar" escape him; he besought him to scent out queer "Omars" (!!!), to capture early "Omars," to import all English "Omars." He (the vice-chancellor) wanted his "Omar" complete. Perhaps his pleasure was in the thought that, as long as he lived, there never would be any end to such a toy—his "Omar" would never be complete: there would probably be two new "Omars" awaiting him on his next Saturday call at the bookseller's.

But the funny thing is that by no other system of gathering books (than by collecting "Omars") could one possibly get together a more worthless

lot of volumes. It is highly probable, indeed nothing is more likely, that the first full-fledged "gift book" was a volume of "Omar Khayyam." There are, of course, editions of the "Rubaiyat" just as presentable in effect as if they were editions of any other book (a few, a few); but there never was any other work of literature which ever got itself into anything like as many queer, odd, strange, and peculiar costumes as our old Persian friend of the now discredited jug.

One of the reasons, doubtless, why the "Rubaiyat" has been so successful (almost, I should say, without parallel) as a gift book is that it is so altogether appropriate to all seasons and occasions. For Christmas there has been, for years amany, no better staple in the book trade than the poem containing the lines:

"And that inverted Bowl we call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to It for help—for It
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I."

Nothing certainly can be pleasanter for a young lady on her birthday than for her to open an embossed cardboard box and take out a dainty

little volume bound in, persumably, ooze mouse, and have her eye light upon the lines:

"Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?"

And any one who has forgotten until the last moment an Easter greeting to, say, an aunt, knows instinctively that an excelelnt makeshift is a dainty volume which includes this quatrain:

"Oh, come with old Khayyam, and leave the Wise
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;
The flower that once has blown forever dies."

And so on. Decoration Day, Independence Day, Hallowe'en, Labor Day, the birthdays of Columbus, Washington, and Lincoln, for weddings and commencements, etc., etc., etc.,—if you want to give a book (and know nothing whatever about books) you light, by some happy instinct, on some fancy get-up of the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam." More different kinds of peo-

ple, doubtless, have bought copies of "Omar" than of any other book going—except the Bible.

* * * *

Funny job—working for a publishing house. I knew a man who worked for a publishing house. He came to a tragic end. Brooded on the thing. Unsettled his mind. Went off his top, clear off, finally. I saw him during his last days. It was very sad. He couldn't place me. (I'd known him for twenty years.) Thought I was an author. Every little bit he would leap up and cry out at me: "Don't tell me the plot! Don't tell me the plot!" Then, shaking and gibbering, he would fall back into his chair, and, covering his face with his hands, moan: "Don't tell me the plot. No, no, no, no!"

It had been, among other things, this man's business to see persons who called to submit manuscripts. I took down some of his ravings, for the weird light they threw on human nature. I find, however, that in the main they are too harrowing to print.

It is an occupation, that of my unfortunate friend's, in which one is continually exposed to one of the most rampant of human perversities—that is the demoniac passion, apparently universal



to-day, to get something or other "published." What talismanic virtue there is about having something or other published it is not, from the inside it would seem, exactly easy to say. Of course there is the idea, doubtless rather prevalent, that to publish a book is instantly to find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

There was that gentleman who came to see my friend, and was what Mr. Herford calls "intensely intense." He fixed my friend with his glittering eye—that eye lit by the delirious fire of being on the quest of getting something published. He pounded his palm with his fist. In a rushing torrent came his words. The novel he had written (in long hand) made him, himself, laugh; it made him cry. It brought out (he declared) all that was best in human nature; that, he believed, was the way to write—to do the world good. It was a religious book, this. Wholesome! Full of real human beings! It was "founded on fact." It was. . . . It was. . . . It was. . . .

Now about the "terms." How many copies would "we" sell? My friend ought to know about a thing like that. And what would be his, the author's, return? When told that, if accepted,

the novel might, luckily, sell out an edition of two thousand copies, within perhaps a year, and that the author would get a royalty of from ten to fifteen per cent on each copy sold—when told these things a ghastly glaze came over this gentelman's popping eyes; his mouth, arrested on the point of speech, hung agape; and altogether he looked as if he might be about to suffer an apoplectic stroke. Then, rallying a bit under the blow: "Why!" he stammered, "I heard that Harold Bell Wright sells into four million!"

The only peaceful memory at all which my friend seemed to have in his poor brain was that of a remarkable lady (remarkable, that is, in this) who apparently regarded any discussion whatever as superfluous. She called one day and, without any preceding negotiations, delivered a large cardboard box containing, presumably, her "complete poetical works"; withdrawing with the single comment: "I suppose you will send me the proofs."

He was, however (my friend), very frightened of the army, of the armies of all the allies. First the English army and the Canadian army had been dribbling in, such of them as had been gassed, or wounded, or were repatriated prison-

ers, or something like that, all with their "personal narratives." There was a little cockney; because of his being, it seems, an immense hero and —being inspired by his consciousness of the popular recognition of this—having suddenly acquired an extraordinary ability for publicly rattling off cockney like a machine-gun, he had become much in demand as a shining speaker at Liberty Loan meetings, and so on. He had doubtless rendered in this way, as well as in the field, highly valuable service. But I fear that, alas! he also had much to do with finishing my friend. On the numerous occasions on which he called, quite unsolicited, to see about his manuscript, he addressed my friend, at the range of something like two feet, as though he were engaged in firing a great audience. You could edge him toward the elevator door bit by bit, and this for the instant seemed to take his mind from the innumerable reasons why his manuscript should be published; but at every third step he stalled and laid down another barrage, so that when finally he was got off, my friend was left with shell-shock for the rest of the morning. His book, by the way, was—just as you would expect. Or perhaps worse.

The English and Canadians, however, were comparatively nothing at all; as, after all, they didn't all get over here. When the American army began to return, it came back a whole race of writers, or rather potential writers. Not exactly writers either, but, as you might say, potential collaborators—as bunches of them frankly confessed that they had never written anything, and knew no more about writing than a goat; but (they insisted) all that was needed for the greatest story ever was just for my friend to whistle back somewhere into the office for a trained journalist to come out with his pad, take down their stuff, and then fix it up right.

So with a young woman who was in my friend's thoughts night and day toward the last. She was a homesteader, or something like that. Or said she had been. Staked a claim away off. Lived alone with a bulldog two hundred miles from nowhere. The eyes of the world to-day, she declared, were turned toward nothing so much as toward homesteading. He didn't see it! Of course, he wouldn't see it! "That is exactly the trouble," she exclaimed, "with you people! Oh, if only you had the vision *to* see *the* things!" All she asked was for him to give her the use of an

office there for several months at a fair salary, and a couple of stenographers, and she would go fifty-fifty with him on her story. She would want, too, some editorial assistance on the job, dressing up the manuscript. And *he* (my friend) was just the man for that. Oh, yes; she had *heard* that he was the very man; and that was the *reason* she had at once come here instead of going to some other house. Such a proposal could not be considered? And she would have to submit her manuscript before any decision on it could be undertaken? Why, she was living in a *furnished room!* The bills were mounting up. She would soon have *no place* to go. She was facing the prospect, facing it right now, of taking an underling *job*. She hated, *hated* it! Then she blazed up and told my friend where he got off as to intelligence. Then she collapsed again, and the weight of her unfortunate destiny again fell upon my friend like a ton of bricks. This call was the opening of an intensive series of communications which this young woman carried on with first my friend and then other members of the staff by letter, by telephone, by messenger, and in person.

Then there is that very natural nervousness

which so many persons have that their manuscripts will not receive an effective reading. That is they have called to explain, to insist, or to entreat (as the case may be), that the first chapter should not be read first, or the first three chapters. But the fourth, or the fifth, chapter must be read first. Then several chapters should be skipped, and the reading taken up again at chapter nineteen. Otherwise the publisher's reader will receive a totally wrong impression of the book.

Many are apprehensive, too, of their book's going for first consideration into the hands of an unsympathetic person. They want to *see* and *explain* to him all about it. And they want to tell how many copies of the book they themselves can sell, because of their prominence in certain clubs, Sunday Schools, charitable organizations, and so on. Or they want to hire the house to publish the book. They are (smiling cheerfully) quite ignorant as to how such things are done, and would like to inquire the cost of a small edition. Or they are the browbeating type, the lady or gentleman who was wont to say, with a sneer, to my friend: "Of course, I understand that you have no interest in the merit of a book, only in its

popular, commercial, success. There is no appreciation, no comprehension, nowadays of the finer things. It's the trash that gets boosted." And, very witheringly indeed, much more to this effect.

And so on, and so on.

One type more, however, I should not omit to mention, and then I am done, for, as I've said, the worst cannot be told. That type is the bribing character. Let him be illustrated in the case of the gentleman who called on my friend the last day before he was taken away. This gentleman was a minister, an army chaplain; submitted a book of poems. He was very effusive. He said, "Tell the young lady who does the most work on it that I'll give her a box of candy." I do not know exactly what his idea was, but I fancy that he confused the matter of reading a manuscript for acceptance or rejection, with the business of proof-reading. And why a young lady, I cannot say. But he probably saw in his mind rows upon rows of such persons somewhere in a large room carefully scanning his book.

He disappeared. While my friend was out at lunch he returned and left at the information desk a small parcel addressed to him. My friend



undid a layer of wrapping paper, and then several layers of tissue paper; and he held in his hand a small copy of the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," bound in undressed mole, or something like that.

